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EDITORIAL

SHOW THE U.N. FLAG

As the Reagan Administration steams toward almost certain calamity in the Persian Gulf because of its decision to wave the American flag at Iran's fanatic mullahs, the pundits are seeking a way out. In its lead editorial on August 16, *The New York Times* delivered a wish list of "more active measures" the White House might take to "face down the Iranians." Those were: invoking the War Powers Act to gain Congressional support; convincing allies in Europe and the gulf of the need for "unity and joint action"; persuading the Soviet Union and China to halt arms shipments to Iran; and stressing U.S. willingness to respond to attacks.

It was no surprise that the United Nations was conspicuously absent from *The Times*'s list. The publication by *The New Republic* of a cover story titled "Let It Sink: The overdue demise of the United Nations" the following week underscored the hostility toward the United Nations that has burgeoned among the American elite during the Reagan era. And *The Times*'s call for a "coherent policy" is one of the lamentable consequences of that attitude. Despite its flaws, there are still occasions when the United Nations can be useful, mainly because of the very thing that irritates critics like *The New Republic*—namely, that the United Nations is not a docile creature of the United States.

The Iran-Iraq war is a case in point for the simple reason that the United Nations is the only interested party to which the Iranian regime has not sworn undying enmity. Strong support for the U.S.-favored Security Council Resolution 598 of July 20 and, more important, for whatever U.N. actions might arise from it (such as a U.N. reflagging of commercial vessels) would help defuse the crisis and generate the kind of international support for which *The Times* is hankering.

LEGAL MURDERS
Christopher Hitchens

IRAN/CONTRA WRAP-UP
David Corn

BELFAST
Sally Belfrage

ME AND DUKAKIS
Philip Green

BLACK MOUNTAIN BREAKDOWN
Eliot Weinberger

SECRET TEAM
Larry Bensky

AN INQUIRY

MONEY, DRUGS AND THE *CONTRAS*

JONATHAN KWITNY

On July 22, *The Washington Post* carried an authoritative-sounding headline: "Hill Panel Finds No Evidence Linking Contras to Drug Smuggling." In fact, there is plenty of evidence.

The House Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, the panel that *The Post* alluded to, had not been able to send investigators to Miami or Central America. The House and Senate select committees investigating the Iran/*contra* affair have evaded the issue. And in the press, the real and disturbing story of *contras* and drugs has been obscured by misstatements and exaggerations.

Over the past six months I have visited Washington, the southern states and Central America, trying to see what could be proved or disproved about the various allegations that have been made against both sides in the *contra* war. Documents and interviews with authoritative sources who spoke on the record confirm the following:

Some of the biggest drug dealers in the United States have allied themselves with the *contras* in the hope of avoiding prosecution by the Federal government. Some prominent *contra* leaders have eagerly accepted airplanes, logistical help and, almost certainly, cash from drug traffickers. Records of aircraft sales and maintenance show that the *contras* obtained a minimum of $350,000 from one drug smuggler alone. Interviews suggest that the total amount of drug money that has gone into the *contras*' coffers runs well into the millions. As the proceeds of illegal drug sales, all that money properly belongs to U.S. taxpayers. Instead, it went to the *contras*, during a period when Congress for-

(*Continued on Page 162*)

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LETTERS.

OUT OF CONTROL

Chicago

The *Nation* article "The Women of Lexington Prison," by William A. Reuben and Carlos Norman [June 27], is an important break in the almost complete media silence on the existence of the first High Security Unit (H.S.U.) built specifically for female political prisoners in the United States.

As one of the attorneys for Lexington inmate Alejandrina Torres, I would like to add some information about the Lexington H.S.U. One of the deliberate aims of the "control unit" is to control every single aspect of the women's lives. Every moment of their day is under the watchful eye of a video camera. Every movement they make is under the control of the ever-present guards. To move from one small room to another, permission must be received from the guards and buttons pushed to unlock doors. A logbook details every action taken or not taken by the women. This includes, for example, the exact amount of food left on the dinner tray and details of each conversation the women have. The goal of this attempt at total control is not only to disorient the women psychologically but to develop a psychological profile that can be used against other political prisoners as well. What upsets them? What makes them mad? The results will be studied and applied.

In addition, the prison is not permitting the women to receive political literature. Any literature mentioning Lexington is routinely denied. And recently, an article in *The Guardian* on a gay and lesbian film festival was denied for "security reasons."

The women have also been attacked on a sexual level. For the first three months of her incarceration, Torres was confined to an all-male floor of the Metropolitan Correctional Center in Chicago. After suffering a minor heart attack, she was put on a women's floor. She has been unnecessarily stripped and searched by a male guard three times. Most recently, in October 1986, as she and Susan Rosenberg were transferred to Lexington H.S.U. from the Metropolitan Correctional Center in Tucson, Arizona, a male guard conducted an unprecedented vaginal and rectal cavity search of (read raped) the women.

The intent of this treatment is not just to break the will and spirit of the women prisoners. Its goal is also to intimidate progressive people, so that we will not take actions for justice because of our fear of repression. Despite this threat, many people have responded. On International Women's Day, March 8, 250 Puerto Rican and North American people demonstrated outside the gates of the control unit, demanding that it be shut down. As a result of a letter-writing campaign, over 5,000 letters have been sent to the warden and the women prisoners. The H.S.U. was forced to lift a ban limiting the women's correspondence to ten approved persons. As a result, their correspondence is unlimited.

Protest groups, such as the Committee to Shut Down the Lexington Control Unit, have formed in Chicago and other U.S. cities. The United Church of Christ and the National Lawyers Guild have taken positions condemning the control unit. One can participate in the following ways: Write letters of protest to Warden Matthews, P.O. Box 2000, F.C.I. Lexington, Lexington, Kentucky 40511; urge Congressman Robert Kastenmeier (U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on the Judiciary, Washington, D.C. 20515-6216) to continue his investigation of the control unit; write to the Puerto Rico Subcommittee of the National Lawyers Guild at 343 S. Dearborn, Suite 1640, Chicago, Illinois 60604 for more information.

The existence of the Lexington H.S.U. is intolerable, not only because of the inhumane treatment of the women prisoners but also because the existence of such a repressive institution clearly indicates the development of a more repressive society. We will not rest until it is shut down.

Melinda Power
Puerto Rico Subcommittee of
The National Lawyers Guild

FO'S PRETENSE

New Haven, Conn.

I never thought I would have to defend William Casey against an attack by *The Nation*, but I find that necessary after reading Thomas M. Disch's review of the play *Almost by Chance a Woman: Elizabeth* by Dario Fo [June 20]. Disch states that "only William Casey could say for sure" whether the Central Intelligence Agency saw that Fo was invited by the Yale Repertory Theatre "to write a satire against Reagan." In fact, I can say for sure that Fo was not invited by the Yale Repertory (for which I work) to write such a play. Fo's play was written and staged in Italy three years before its American premiere at Yale. The play concerns state terrorism, *Hamlet*, Shakespeare, Queen Elizabeth I and her loss of control over her government; if Disch thought the play "is to be understood as a satire on President Reagan," he misunderstood both the press release to which he refers and the first half of the play. (He admits he did not stay to see the second half.) Some references to Reagan were added, in a prologue and a few other spots, but most of the second act's lines about negotiations for Elizabethan hostages were written years before the Iran/*contra* hearings, and Fo's satire uncannily anticipated current events. That is why, in the press release I wrote, I suggested that life was imitating art, as "Irangate" witnesses appeared to borrow lines from Fo's dialogue.

Fo has been regarded as one of Europe's leading political satirists, and it is unfortunate that readers of *The Nation* were offered almost no details about his play—obviously nothing about its second act, and very little about its first act—in Disch's commentary. If he thought that *Elizabeth* was simply a satire against Reagan, Disch missed much more than half the play. I hope that *Nation* readers will someday learn Fo's full story (which need not be told by William Casey, and was not told by Thomas Disch).

Joel Schechter

DISCH REPLIES

New York City

The suggestion that Dario Fo could have laid such an egg as *Elizabeth* only at the instigation of the Central Intelligence Agency was intended as a satirical jab. That Schechter doesn't recognize it as such is no surprise, since he would seem (as the defender of *Elizabeth*) to be humor-impaired, a handicap it would be cruel to ridicule.

To deal with Schechter's objections with due solemnity: It is a form of opportunism and bad faith to lay claim to satirizing an object so deserving of satire as our feckless President—in both the Yale Repertory's press releases and a long prologue written by the author—if such satire is only an afterthought. When the lampoon falls flat (and I have scarcely been alone in that estimate), to be told that it was never intended is like hearing Reagan's spokesmen assert that the Boland amendment doesn't apply to the President. That Fo has a considerable reputation I noted in my review, but that was not considerable enough to enforce my laughter—or to keep me in my seat once it had become clear that *Elizabeth* was a lost cause in all categories. I didn't *miss* the last half of the play: I escaped it. *Thomas M. Disch*

CORRECTION

The "Resources" list in the special issue "Gorbachev's Soviet Union" [June 13] contained two errors. The executive director of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War is William Monning, and the organization's telephone number is (617) 868-5050.

The Nation welcomes letters—typed, double spaced and no longer than 300 words, please. Longer letters may be edited for reasons of space. Our policy is to publish as many letters as space permits, but inevitably a backlog develops, so please bear with us.

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EDITORIALS.

The Phony Peace

The oxymoronic Reagan peace plan for Central America stands Clausewitz on his head: From the President's topsy-turvy position, diplomacy is an extension of war by other means, a sidearm, fallback, second-channel attempt to get the plunder of victory without the casualties of battle. The prize Reagan covets, of course, is the independence of Nicaragua, which has quite miraculously eluded his grasp through six and a half years of trying. The Sandinista revolution not only overturned an American client tyrant but successfully removed the small, poor country from the U.S. strategic and economic orbit. That freedom—not any fears or fancies of Soviet aggression or repressive rule—sticks in Reagan's craw, and he cannot cough it loose.

One unexpected but perfectly logical consequence of the Sandinistas' survival is the support offered by Nicaragua's Central American neighbors for its continuing struggle for independence from American power. The proposals put forth by Costa Rica's President, Oscar Arias, and signed by the region's leaders in Guatemala early this month are more a show of solidarity than the outline of a settlement. Five years ago, no President of Costa Rica would have dared take a stand in opposition to U.S. intervention. And five

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years ago, no President of the United States would have yielded so swiftly to the agenda of its allies. Not the least of Nicaragua's accomplishments in the face of Reagan's counter-revolution has been its ability to convince other countries that it is possible to stand up to Washington and live.

Although there are some similar points in the plans offered by Arias and by Reagan (with the fatuous complicity of House Speaker Jim Wright), the political messages they contain are poles apart. As Reagan has now made clear, his idea was always to keep the *contra* war going until Nicaragua re-entered the American sphere of influence or, as the White House rhetoricians like to put it, returned to the "democratic family" of nations. The way it worked was that negotiations between the government and the "rebels" would be structured to facilitate that return. The message of the Arias plan, however, is that the abandonment of U.S. intervention is the sine qua non of negotiations in the region, and the necessary precondition for peace.

Reagan rushed his proposal onto the table, so to speak, in the vain hope that it would pre-empt the Arias process. Within seventy-two hours, it was Reagan who was pre-empted. Speaker Wright declared that the Central American initiative took precedence, and Reagan was reported ready to ask for more aid to his *contras* when Congress reconvenes next month. President Daniel Ortega had, at least in the short run, divided, outmaneuvered and outflanked the brief bipartisan effort to impose a Yankee peace in the region.

From the beginning, Reagan has pushed his diplomatic démarche on two fronts, the foreign and domestic. He might have known that it would play poorly in the overseas provinces (although he must have been shocked that it closed overnight), but he continues to believe that it will have a longer run in the States. The strength of the Sandinistas, the ineptitude of the *contras* and the trauma of the Congressional hearings forced the Administration into a show of compromise and moderation, however shallow and cynical it looked to be. Reagan could not very well have asked Congress to resupply the war without at least a perfunctory obeisance to the negotiating process. Now that he has made his gesture and it has been rebuffed, Congress will have to decide whether it wants to continue the carnage or end it once and for all. The way things line up on Capitol Hill this year, it is the Democrats who hold the key to that decision, and how they turn may very well shape politics and the Presidency until the end of this century.

The Democrats may need some pushing, as David Corn's account of the capitulation of an all-too-loyal opposition in the Iran/*contra* hearings on page 152 shows. Efforts by anti-intervention activists will thus take on a heightened urgency in the coming weeks as the crucial vote on renewal of *contra* funding approaches. A coalition of church, labor and peace groups called Countdown '87 is mobilizing, and organizers pledge to raise more than a half-million dollars for television advertising to counter the pro-*contra* media blitz now being sponsored by conservatives.

One issue that has not received the attention it deserves is the *contra* drug connection. The use of drug money as a form of clandestine aid to the anti-Sandinistas should come as no surprise, given the history of such operations by U.S. intelligence organizations, which have formed cozy and mutually beneficial alliances with heroin syndicates (e.g., the "French Connection" after World War II and the Golden Triangle during the Vietnam War). As investigative reporter Jonathan Kwitny writes this week [see front cover], the *contras* have accepted millions of dollars from drug smugglers while U.S. officials looked the other way. Instead of stopping the smuggling, the Reagan Administration tried to shift the blame to Nicaragua, even offering a cocaine czar his freedom in exchange for testimony implicating high Sandinista officials—a story Martin Lee will relate next week.

There is still room for debate on the extent of the drug connection. According to Kwitny, some independent investigators have claimed more than they can prove in this matter; in our opinion, such claims merit the sort of scrutiny that only Congressional committees with subpoena power can—and should—provide.

Who's Counting?

Another peculiar chapter in the sordid story of Pentagon contracting closed recently, when the Justice Department announced that it had abandoned a major fraud case against General Dynamics. Building weapons continues to be one of the most foolproof ways of cleaning the taxpayer's clock, to paraphrase former Defense Department Inspector General Joseph Sherick—at least if the company is big enough to scatter the Reagan Administration's feeble watchdogs.

The General Dynamics case pivoted on an allegation that from 1978 to 1981 the company tricked the government into paying for cost overruns on a program to develop the Army's ill-fated Sergeant York antiaircraft tank. The fixed-price contract implied that General Dynamics would have to shoulder all costs above $39 million; but the company billed nearly an additional $3 million in related labor and materials to two other Federal accounts. Four high-ranking employees were indicted in December 1985, including James Beggs, who by then had become head of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Beggs was forced to resign.

When the Justice Department called a press conference on June 22 to explain why it was dropping the case, William Weld, chief of the department's criminal division, said that documents had been unearthed after the indictment that showed the billing tactic to be permissible. He did not produce the documents, but said they were part of eighty-two boxes of Army papers that had been obtained by the company's lawyers under a Freedom of Information Act request. "The facts went south, as we say in the trade," Weld lamented about the botched prosecution.

Since the press conference, Congressional investigators have been trying to piece together exactly what went where. Justice Department lawyers have thrown in the towel on a remarkable number of big defense-industry fraud cases dur-

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ing the Reagan years, including a three-year General Dynamics shipbuilding probe just this May. The three members of Congress who have followed the issue most doggedly—Representative John Dingell, Senators William Proxmire and Charles Grassley—fear something is terribly awry: either a lack of political will among certain Justice officials or serious flaws in the system when it comes to prosecuting such grotesquely complicated cases.

The General Dynamics indictment was spearheaded by Randy Bellows, one of three Justice Department prosecutors assigned to the affair. Bellows joined the department's fraud section in August 1983. In a telephone interview he declined to discuss his role in the case, but said he was "very troubled about what has happened, about the perception of Justice's actions before the [December 1985] indictment." Bellows left the Justice Department in January and is now serving on the Iran/*contra* special prosecutor staff.

Prior to the indictment, the Justice Department had subpoenaed some records related to the Sergeant York project from the Army, but had not interviewed all government officials involved in the contract negotiations. In January 1986, General Dynamics' lawyers filed their voluminous F.O.I.A. request for the Army's relevant papers, which had to pass through the Justice Department on their way to the corporation's offices. In some 114 boxes of material were papers that led prosecutors to Army officials who indicated the service had made contract concessions to the company.

Investigators for Representative Dingell reported at a hearing of his Energy and Commerce Committee oversight subpanel on July 30 that the Army gave General Dynamics a green light to allocate the excess $3 million to two general overhead accounts. The company had already spent about $13 million of its own money above the contract ceiling, which had been set artificially low to make it more palatable to Congress. The Army's reaction to $3 million more on Federal accounts was, "Why not?" according to a government contracts specialist interviewed by the Justice Department.

The matter of a government body nodding while a company plays fast and loose with contract terms, called "acquiescence" in legal parlance, has come up often in defense fraud cases. Indeed, the investigation of General Dynamics' Navy shipbuilding contracts that was shut down in May collapsed in part because the Navy was indifferent to the company's enormous overcharges in constructing submarines in the 1970s.

"A mom-and-pop operation simply cannot compete against some of the most powerful corporate entities of the twentieth century," observed an aide to Senator Proxmire about the government's abortive attempts to take on big fraud cases. Among the Justice Department's "mom-and-pop" shortcomings, on which senior corporate lawyers can easily capitalize, are inexperience and excessive staff turnover. There is also a revolving-door problem, typified by the recent departure of fraud-section chief Robert Ogren to Pettit and Martin, a Washington law firm that specializes in defending corporate clients involved in criminal fraud investigations. Ogren showed an aptitude for the job when in 1983 he recommended that a longstanding probe of Newport News Shipbuilding Company be closed, despite evidence of fraud and criminal conspiracy.

William Weld told the Dingell subcommittee that "combating defense procurement fraud is the number one white-collar crime priority" of the Justice Department. He also opined that "rather than venal or improper acquiescence on the part of government officials," many defense fraud cases reveal "mutual reinforcement of interests"—profit for the contractors and "mission" for the military. That is, of course, the old military-industrial complex in action. All the weapons-buying reforms of recent years appear to have done nothing to alter such complicity. WAYNE BIDDLE

Wayne Biddle is a Washington-based journalist who writes frequently about the aerospace industry.

Summer Skunks

A friend in the country is raising a pair of orphaned skunks, and he says the main trick of it has been to rub their stomachs thoroughly after they have had their bottle so they won't get colic, and otherwise always to keep them calm. While he is actually handling them, they won't spray, but when they're scrambling about on their own, a sudden noise from elsewhere in the house can set them off. Kitten-sized, they're just as cute, though with remarkably wide white stripes down their backs—that warning emblem even in babyhood—and flat, trowel-shaped heads for wedging themselves into hollows after mice. They have a wilder energy than a cat's, and faces like a wolverine's, a fellow member of the weasel family. (My friend is allergic to cats but not to skunks.)

Everything from snakemouth orchids to Turk's-cap lilies—from least flycatchers to blackburnian warblers—he has seen this summer. Nature is seedy, and reaches an apex with the noise of shrill young birds all over, hectically imitating their parents' songs. Lots of frogs mean several great blue herons have been around. The summer parades had the pomp of tubas and a Yankee Doodle Dandy striding by on stilts, antique tractors, the town's backhoe and cherry picker and yellow fire engine. Bake sales, garage sales, people collecting stones along a highway cut to build a terrace with, and the eternal fact that dogs will come to stand next to you to shake themselves after a swim.

In the marsh a pair of wrens had built a set of dummy nests to fool such predators as skunks, and fledged their young. It is a mammalian sort of ruse; and yet birds' strange garb of feathers and their miraculous gift of flight somehow alienate us from them at the same time as we think they are among the wonders of the world. Skunks grub for insects on the lawn just as robins do, but, like us, they are ground-dwellers, they can't fly away—only walk (or spray) or run. EDWARD HOAGLAND

Edward Hoagland's books include African Calliope *and* Seven Rivers West *(both Penguin).*

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MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

State Penitentiary, Parchman, Mississippi

I had to come this far to see my first gas chamber. The apparatus is encased in a flagon-shaped container, rather like a man-sized version of the killing bottles used by lepidopterists. The killing bottle in turn is housed in a shed. And the shed is adjacent to a row of cells, in which the human specimens are kept for the bottle's convenience.

It ought to be the work of a moment to take a man out of a cell, whisk him into the bottle and put him beyond the reach of earthly cares. But in some peculiar way the process is a protracted one. The man I had come to see, Edward Earl Johnson, had been kept waiting for eight years. During those eight years, which began shortly after his eighteenth birthday, he had seen and heard other men being fed into the bottle. When the bottle is being readied, the sound of the guards and technicians going about their tasks is clearly audible. They tend to whoop, with excitement or disappointment, when they "do the bunnies." "Doing the bunnies" involves inserting some experimental rabbits into the bottle and observing the effect of cyanide gas upon them. Sometimes the bunnies check out very rapidly. Other times they linger. If you are in a cell waiting to be gassed yourself, you can gauge the probable speed of your own demise by the noises coming from the shed.

The last man to enter the bottle before Johnson was Jimmy Lee Gray. Even the prison authorities admit that his death was low on dignity and lacking in dispatch. Shortly after midnight on September 2, 1983, a switch was thrown, causing lethal fumes to rise from the cyanide crystals. Gray went into convulsions, which lasted for eight minutes. He was observed to gasp deeply eleven times and to smash his head repeatedly on the metal pole behind him. After those eight minutes the guards lost their nerve and hustled the witnesses from the shed, where they had been gaping through the bottle's glass flanks. So nobody really knows how long it took Jimmy Lee to pay his ultimate debt to society. Johnson, who was gassed a few days after I said goodbye to him, survived in the bottle for a full fifteen minutes.

Jimmy Lee Gray was white and had pleaded guilty to the murder of a white child. Edward Earl Johnson was black and denied to the end that he had shot a white policeman. According to evidence recently accepted by the Supreme Court, a black man who kills a white is three times more likely to suffer the penalty of death than a white man who kills a white. A black man who kills a white is eleven times more likely to be slain by the state than a white man who kills a black. In my idealistic youth this was known as racial discrimination, or even racism. Now, says the majority on the Supreme Court, it is "a discrepancy that appears to correlate with race." However, as the Justices went on to say, such "apparent disparities in sentencing are an inevitable part of our criminal justice system." If that last statement is true, it is rather a condemnation.

If you get hold of Amnesty International's report "The United States of America: The Death Penalty" (322 Eighth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10001, $6), you can read a meticulous account of the operations of the capital punishment system. The gas chamber, the firing squad and the electric chair are employed on the mentally ill, on juveniles, on racial minorities and, of course, on those who have committed no crime. State and regional variations in sentencing make a mockery of consistency and therefore of even the vaguest utility of that incoherent concept "the deterrent." The fashion for allegedly more humane execution by lethal injection has resulted in obscenely painful and grotesque episodes and involves the corruption of the Hippocratic code of medical ethics. Yet under the Reagan Administration this death cult has been given every encouragement to spread.

Two additional objections struck me during my stay at Parchman. The first was so obvious that it took me some time to realize it. Edward Earl Johnson was not merely rotting under sentence of death; he was being tortured. I had never actually seen anyone being tortured before. Perhaps, as a member of the post-Nuremberg generation, I had naïvely supposed that the practice had been at least officially done away with. But if I was confined in a windowless cell shortly after my eighteenth birthday, and was kept waiting for eight years to know if I would live or go to the bottle, I would believe that I was in prison not *as* punishment but *for* punishment. That is torture. The State of Mississippi makes a big thing of the last-minute reprieve, or stay. (Justice Earl Warren once telephoned Parchman at midnight, only to be told that it was too late; now they wait a ritual extra ten minutes.) So you don't know, even when the men with masks and rubber gloves enter your cell, that it is really the end. And then it can take you quite a long time to die, with strangers watching. The tableau is made complete by the representatives of my two least favorite professions—the lawyer and the priest. These have been essential fixtures at the stake and the scaffold since medieval times. But we have no right to consider torture medieval while it is still legally practiced in the New World.

My second objection is that capital punishment strikes directly at democracy and due process. It can't be coincidence that it is used most frequently in countries that consider the citizen to be the property of the state. In a caste-bound or dictatorial system, the condemned can be taken from the dock to the execution yard, and that's that. At least the relatives of the victim (if the system has picked the right culprit) have the paltry satisfaction of swift justice. But democracy requires appeal procedures, mature consideration, review, and the possibility of clemency and revision. This, in the strict sense, is incompatible with the death penalty and, when combined with it, makes a charade of the legal system, turning ostensibly humane review into a protracted humiliation.

Racist, brutalizing, antidemocratic, sadistic and thoughtless—is it any wonder that this special symbol of primitivism is undergoing a recrudescence in the era of Edwin Meese?

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Back From Vacation

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ARTICLES.

IRAN/*CONTRA* WRAP-UP

The Big Ones That Got Away

DAVID CORN

Shortly before he banged the gavel for the last time and sent the Iran/*contra* Congressional hearings into history, Senator Daniel Inouye, chair of the Senate select committee, solemnly intoned, "The story has now been told." Perhaps he meant the *Reader's Digest* version, for the hearings hardly offered a comprehensive account.

Those watching or listening to the hearings did not receive the complete word on Lieut. Col. Oliver North's wide-ranging operations aimed at Nicaragua, did not learn of the possibility that funds other than those generated by the Iran arms deals were diverted to the *contras* and were not told about allegations that Justice Department investigations into *contra* gunrunning were stalled or blocked. The committees were careful not to embarrass the Central Intelligence Agency or to probe matters that might prompt questions about U.S. military alliances, including those with El Salvador and Israel. Also off-limits was the Administration's special operations and counterterrorism infrastructure, which was intertwined with the Iran initiative and the White House *contra* crusade.

Many of the obvious leftover questions—e.g., Was Director of Central Intelligence William Casey the Mr. Big of North's outfit?—as well as much of the conflicting testimony should be addressed in the select committees' report, due out in October. That will have to present in coherent form the voluminous information the committees, to their credit, did unearth. But the summation is likely to contain the same gaps as the hearings, which reflected the capitulation of the Democrats, who, after all, controlled the committees and the terms of the proceedings. Here is a list of some of the subjects the committees ignored, glossed over or left dangling.

§ *The Secret War of Oliver North.* The committees doggedly pursued North's purchase of snow tires with *contra* traveler's checks, then raised the white flag. Testimony and documents offered glimpses of what North and his comrades were up to, but the hearings never developed a total portrait of their war against the Sandinistas. The inquisitors focused mainly on the resupply operation North ran, and all but ignored his management of military and nonmilitary operations within Nicaragua and recruitment of mercenaries for the *contras*.

For example, retired Maj. Gen. Richard Secord testified that at an all-night meeting at the Miami Airport Hotel in July 1985, he and North conferred with *contra* leaders on "the need for [the rebels] to get into some of the urban areas" inside Nicaragua. But Secord refused to discuss this further in an open hearing, and he was asked no more about it. In his testimony North admitted he had authorized David Walker, a former British Special Air Service member, to perform military operations "in Managua and elsewhere, in an effort to improve the perception that the Nicaraguan resistance could operate anywhere." According to a staff member of the committees, the joint panel discovered evidence that Walker may have blown up a Nicaraguan hospital by mistake. But no member or counsel made any public inquiry about that.

In a December 1984 memorandum, North said Walker was referred to him by John Lehman, then Secretary of the Navy. North told national security adviser Robert McFarlane he would finance Walker and set Walker up with *contra* leader Adolfo Calero. What was Lehman's connection to Walker? The committees did not ask. Nor did they inquire about a note North made indicating his interest in signing up a mercenary fresh out of jail.

In questioning North, Representative Thomas Foley alluded to "policies of intimidation" conducted inside Nicaragua, which North apparently mentioned in a closed session. The specifics of that program went unexplained. The committees also kept mum on the "nonmilitary activities" North directed. But North noted during his public testimony that he was involved in publishing "pamphlets" in Managua, running radio broadcasts and supporting the internal opposition in Nicaragua. He remarked that he had an understanding with the committees not to discuss those activities. That agreement was honored.

North's reported control over certain elite military units apparently was also taboo. On July 26, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* revealed that North and the National Security Council "developed and controlled a network of secret military units" that had directly fought Sandinista troops inside Nicaragua [see Alexander Cockburn, "Beat the Devil," *The Nation*, August 15/22]. Only in the waning hours of the hearings, when Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger was on the stand, did a committee member refer to this network. Without explaining what had been reported, Senator Sam Nunn asked Weinberger to comment on the article. "Totally untrue," Weinberger replied.

But the committees released a February 1985 memorandum in which North proposed seizing or sinking a ship carrying weapons to Nicaragua. North noted the *contras* were not able to undertake such a task and would have to "be provided with the maritime assets." Attached to the memo was a note from Rear Adm. John Poindexter, then deputy national security adviser, saying that the Boland amendment prohibited such assistance but that the mission could be achieved "without any involvement of Calero and Freedom Fighters." North's memo and Poindexter's comments indicate that the N.S.C. had some military means at its disposal.

In reviewing North's Central American adventures, the

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committees scrutinized the participation of the U.S. Ambassador and C.I.A. station chief in Costa Rica, but neglected the El Salvador connection. North's resupply planes flew out of Ilopango Air Force Base, El Salvador's main military airfield, with the blessing and assistance of Col. James Steele, the senior U.S. military adviser to El Salvador, and Gen. Juan Rafael Bustillo, the base commander. Edwin Corr, U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador, reportedly knew of the operation but has denied that charge. In February 1985 Gen. Paul Gorman, then head of the U.S. Southern Command, sent a cable apparently addressed to Thomas Pickering, Corr's predecessor, regarding Felix Rodriguez, the ex-C.I.A. agent who was involved in a so-called counterterrorism campaign against the Salvadoran rebels and who served as North's liaison at Ilopango. General Gorman reported that Rodriguez "has been put into play by Ollie North" and that although Rodriguez was based in El Salvador, his task concerned "forces operating elsewhere" in Central America. "Will keep you informed," Gorman wrote.

What did Ambassadors Pickering and Corr know of North's campaign? What role did Gorman and the U.S. Southern Command play in North's war? What was reported back to the State Department and the Pentagon? Under what agreement was North able to station his resupply outfit on an El Salvador military base? All of those questions went unasked. To have posed them, the committees would have had to take up U.S. military activities and alliances within the region. That evidently was sacred territory.

§ *The Money Trail.* During the hearings, the committees extensively examined several segments of the intricate money pipeline. But certain aspects escaped scrutiny. For example, the committees released arms merchant Albert Hakim's bank records, which disclose all transfers in and out of Lake Resources and his other accounts. One of the many listed transactions not covered shows that Hakim paid more than $1.7 million to a Portuguese arms firm for a project identified as "CIA" and apparently unrelated to the Iran weapons deal or the *contra* supply operation. What was it?

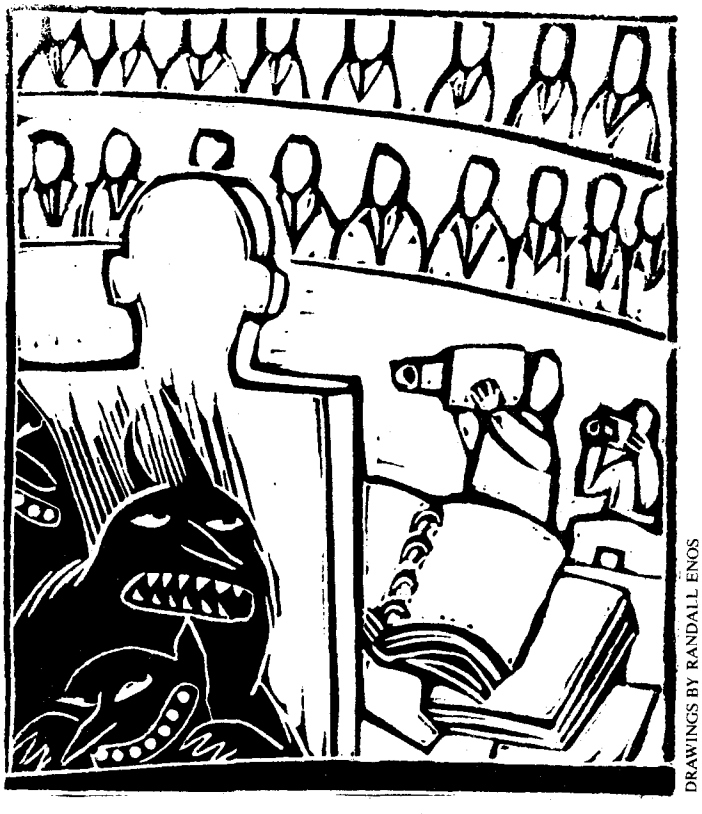
Hakim's ledger also reveals direct payments to various *contra* leaders. The committees declined to explore how the money was used. In fact, they did not perform any public dissection of *contra* finances. "A big nagging question," said a source who used to work with the rebels, "is, With all the money the *contras* got—from Saudi Arabia, indicted fund-raiser Carl 'Spitz' Channell and Lake Resources—who made the decisions [on] how it was dispersed?"

A draft of an internal Department of Justice memorandum written in November 1986 by Ralph Martin, an attorney in the criminal division, and sent to Assistant Attorney General William Weld, head of the division, reported that the department's fraud division "has conclusively established" that U.S. funds appropriated for so-called humanitarian *contra* aid were "used to buy weapons, an act clearly prohibited by the Boland amendment." That scam, the memo said, was "committed by 'unilateral assets' of the CIA." One *contra*, according to the memo, had informed the fraud division that the head of the State Department's Nicaraguan Humanitarian Assistance Office, Robert Duemling, instructed him to certify falsely that humanitarian aid had been received.

The committees elected not to bring up at the hearings those portions of the memo, though they did release it to the public. Nor did they address its disclosure that a "preliminary inquiry" gave "rise to reasonable suspicions that North and other officials may have knowingly diverted [to the *contras*] funds *other than the arms sale profits and the funds used to ship the arms.*" [Emphasis in the original.] In fact, shortly before the hearings began, Senators Inouye and Warren Rudman said they had evidence that U.S. funds earmarked for other purposes may have been used to aid the rebels. Yet there was no mention of any diversion other than that of the Iran arms-sale profits.

When Poindexter was on the stand, Representative Les Aspin maintained that a review of the *contras*' finances convinced him that they had received support from sources other than those covered by the hearings, though he was unable to say what those were. Could it be from U.S. covert aid for the Afghan resistance—as some mujahedeen supporters have long suspected—or from another secret program? Was humanitarian aid converted into weaponry? The Justice Department memo raises those possibilities. Did the committees not pursue those leads because a highly publicized investigation into the misuse of nonlethal funds or other diversions could discredit the notion of humanitarian aid or call too much attention to other covert programs?

§ *The Ones Who Got Away.* The list of Iran/*contra* affair figures not called before the hot lights and television cameras is a long one. Two of the biggest fish who did appear but slipped the hook were Attorney General Edwin Meese 3d and Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams.



DRAWINGS BY RANDALL ENOS

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During Meese's two days on the stand, committee members probed in exhaustive detail the inquiry he conducted into the Iran/*contra* affair in November 1986 and soundly criticized the Attorney General for running a shoddy investigation. But Meese was not forced to answer on national television charges first published in *The Village Voice* that he tried to obstruct or delay a Miami-based Justice Department investigation into *contra* gunrunning. Instead, the House and Senate panels submitted written questions to the Attorney General after he left the stand.

Thus the committees did not inquire publicly about a handwritten note attached to a March 20, 1986, secret Justice Department memorandum concerning the gunrunning investigation. The message, from Associate Attorney General Stephen Trott to Mark Richard, a Deputy Assistant Attorney General in the criminal division, read: "Please get on top of this. D.L.J. [D. Lowell Jensen, then Deputy Attorney General] is giving a heads up to the N.S.C. He would like us to watch over it. Call [Leon] Kellner, find out what is up, and advise him that decisions should be run by you." Kellner is the U.S. Attorney in Miami whose office handled the gunrunning case. The note, penned at a time when the White House was fighting for $100 million in *contra* aid, shows that high-level Justice Department officials were quite concerned with an investigation that threatened to tarnish the rebels. (Meese is not clear yet; this whole episode is under investigation by the House subcommittee on crime.)

According to Ralph Martin's draft memo, an assistant U.S. Attorney in San Diego claimed a high-level Customs Service official interfered with another Justice Department investigation involving the *contras*. In public the committees had no questions for Meese about that, either.

Abrams also sneaked past the committees. When he appeared, he was put through the wringer for having withheld from Congress information concerning the Administration's solicitation of $10 million from the Sultan of Brunei. But the committees failed to nail Abrams for knowing of North's *contra* supply efforts. Abrams testified under oath that he was utterly unaware of North's operation; North maintained he had fully briefed Abrams on his *contra*-aiding efforts. North recalled a meeting in the Pentagon, attended by Abrams, in which North "went down, item by item by item, the things that I was doing, and asked them point blank whether or not I had to continue to do them." North also mentioned that he thought he had given the committees contemporaneous notes of that meeting. (Texts of two N.S.C. electronic messages also suggest Abrams knew more than he claimed about North's activities.) If North's testimony is true, Abrams committed perjury. But when Abrams's boss, Secretary of State George Shultz, faced the committees maintaining that Abrams should be forgiven his error in not notifying Congress, not a single member inquired about the significance of North's testimony and the possibility that Abrams lied under oath.

But the ones who truly got off scot-free were the *contras*. The committees gave little notice to testimony and documents they received showing *contra* involvement in narcotics trafficking [see Jonathan Kwitny, front cover]. Allegations of *contra* corruption also breezed by at the hearings. At a post-hearing dinner for reporters who covered the proceedings, a group of about a dozen journalists was asked if any could recall a negative comment made about the *contras* during the entire hearings. Heads were scratched; no one could recollect a discouraging word.

From the start, the Republican committee members, solidly for *contra* aid, tried to turn the hearings into a pro-rebel forum. The Democrats, split on the question, emphasized process; they seemed most upset by the way the White House bypassed Congress. Some Democratic members, with characteristic overcaution, adopted a strategy whereby they would not challenge *contra* aid directly, convinced that the proceedings would reveal the rebels' ugliness and do in the program.

The debate wasn't whether to conduct a black war in Central America, but how to go about it. The committees' majority did not want a bare-all examination of North's ventures—or an unveiling of the C.I.A.'s hidden role. Consider the committees' decision not to ask Robert Gates, deputy director of the C.I.A., to take the stand, for fear, as Inouye admitted, that his testimony would embarrass the agency. The Democrats, concerned that they look "responsible," held back. This also caused them to agree to wrap up the hearings by an arbitrary deadline, leading to an even more restrained probe of the Iran/*contra* episode.

All of the subjects ignored by the committees during the hearings can still be included in their final report. Representative Lee Hamilton, chair of the House panel, says that staff investigators are still on the job. But even if the report covers what the hearings missed, cold print cannot counter the impact of the televised hearings, which millions of Americans watched. How many will read the thick document the committees produce? The ball has been dropped. As Representative Peter Rodino said of Meese's inquiry, "Key questions weren't asked. You have to wonder why." □

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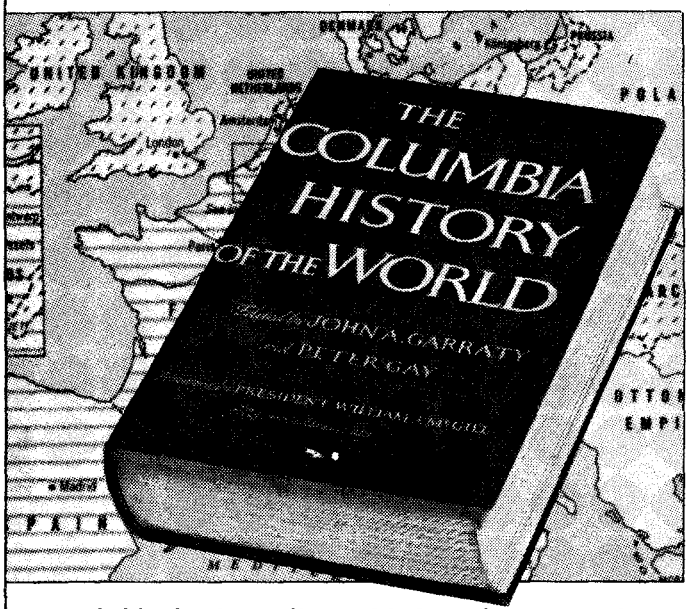

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'TO HELL WITH THE FUTURE'

In Belfast, War Is a Way of Life

SALLY BELFRAGE

When I first went to Belfast I believed that all people would choose peace, but that violence has its reasons and is sometimes justified. There is no choice in South Africa or anywhere else where injustice is institutionalized beyond the means of peaceful confrontation to affect it. There are those, particularly in America and England, who see the Catholic plight in Northern Ireland that same way, a view encouraged in West Belfast, where a Sinn Fein mural links African National Congress and Irish Republican Army insignia under the sign "APARTHEID FREE ZONE." (Sinn Fein, the political wing of the I.R.A., calls its members Republicans.) But only a few weeks in Belfast made me feel the parallel to be inappropriate. There is no way to gloss over the horrors and injustices that have been endured by Catholics, but it also seems an insult to the A.N.C. and the I.R.A. to see the Catholic experience in Northern Ireland now as equivalent to the black South African one, or the Protestants as Afrikaners. Racism is racism wherever it is, but the degrees of power exercised in its name obviously differ.

In Northern Ireland, while the authority to abuse power is available and in use, the trappings of a free society still exist. It is the best illustration I've seen of the old dilemma: freedom for all, or freedom for all except the enemies of freedom. The British view of who are the "enemies of freedom" is what the insurgents have to contend with. Still, in Northern Ireland anyone who doesn't make waves can live a life that is light years away from the life of everyone in Soweto.

The bigotry on both sides is the reverse of the patriotism on which Protestants and Catholics rely for political energy. With life on an unemployment handout a mean affair from every point of view, drive and purpose are to be found in the glorious cause of Us versus Them. The "us" is based not on class but entirely on tribal identity with a religious label. "This is not a religious war," everyone says; but fear and suspicion flourish in churches, nurtured by the smugness of those who consider themselves saved, with the implication that the lives of the unsaved are less valuable. And there is bigotry beyond mere attitude of mind in killing a fellow Irishman because of what amounts to a disagreement over who is "us."

It worried me how, if peace ever came to Northern Ireland, people could live together again after becoming so used to violence. More precisely, it worried me that the people supporting violence don't seem to worry about the lessons in means they are bequeathing their children on the way to their noble ends. This question is usually regarded as irrelevant. "Think, say, of the Second World War," a Republican woman said to me. "You didn't find people who killed in wartime incorporating that violence into their civilian lives later: They understood the difference." Yes, but World War II lasted for six years and the present "Troubles" have already gone on three times as long, not counting the inheritance of centuries, and have penetrated communities in a permanent kind of way. What of those who have grown up knowing nothing else? To distinguish between permissible and impermissible violence must ultimately depend on a strong moral sense, very hard to maintain when your battlefield is civilian life and your acts of heroism are defined in courts of law as criminal activity.

One of the most painful of all the conversations I had in Belfast was with the mother of an I.R.A. volunteer, who said she foresaw only two ends for him: a life sentence or coming home in a box. "I don't think he will scratch many gray hairs," she said. She waited; she did nothing but wait. She was completely bewildered by him, because his morality was no longer hers. "His eyes have changed," she kept saying. "I try to tell him that I don't want him to hurt anybody, I don't care who they are or what for. But he won't listen, his eyes have changed. Sometimes I think it would be better if it was all over and he was dead."

Yet the effort to make sure people "understand the difference" goes on. One way is to impose a rigid orthodoxy on beliefs and behavior. There is no compromise in holy war; dogma rules in Belfast. On the Protestant side it often seems to be dogma for its own sake. They just say no.

Another way to keep ends and means separate is through culture. For the Nationalists, Catholics who favor merger with the Republic of Ireland, war and cultural activity reinforce each other. They are far more interested in Irish-language classes (often taught by men who learned Gaelic in prison) and traditional music and sport than are people in the South. The sense of Irish identity derived from the culture feeds a political consciousness that drives the war; the war creates a heightened nationalism that feeds an urgency for the language and music.

Meanwhile the Loyalists, the Protestant Unionists who want Northern Ireland to retain its ties to Britain, have a hard time constructing a tradition of their own. As an aspect of their culture-envy, they take on the enemy form without its content—the brutal and dogmatic features of the war unattached to a solid base in culture or history. They end up with no more than a meager structure for their behavior: marching to commemorate William of Orange's victory over King James II 300 years ago at the Battle of the Boyne (a river that isn't even in the North), or the siege of the Apprentice Boys of Londonderry, the No Home Rule of the Unionists in 1912, the Battle of the Somme. Those events are just about the sum of their past; without them they don't know who they are, but only who they aren't (or, more ac-

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Sally Belfrage is the author of Living in War: A Belfast Year *(Elisabeth Sifton Books/Viking), from which this article was excerpted.* *Copyright © Sally Belfrage 1987. Used by arrangement with the Wallace & Sheil Agency.*

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curately, who they don't want to be). One middle-class Protestant woman said: "Loads and loads of people call themselves Prods not because they're Prods but because they're not Catholics. I think Protestants have no identity. Catholics know who they are; we don't. So we try to be more British than the British, like the old Anglo-Indian." People such as Protestant military leader Andy Tyrie speak of having been robbed of their history, and are anxious to put together more. Without it Loyalist fighters too easily slide into gangsterism, brainlessly copying only the symptoms of a consciousness bred into the very blood of Republicans. It will be very difficult ever to tame those Loyalists. When their policemen are killed by Republicans for being British stooges, the Loyalists are determined to avenge what they see simply as Protestant deaths, without possessing another reason. Killing without a reason can be a very simple and attractive solution to conflict. After the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985, Loyalists took to attacking Protestant policemen themselves. When they want to fight, who is there to fight? "Whoever comes in front of you," said one who'd left fighting behind.

Those Protestants who have transcended violence have a tendency to see all the fighting in their own side's light. They don't understand Republicanism, and Republicans have never made efforts to be understood by them. It is easier for someone in London or New York to tune in to the Irish cultural and political tradition than for a Protestant in Belfast. A maverick from Loyalism, thinking of the hollow, lurid battles he once fought, has little sense of the tradition of freedom struggle compelling his Catholic fellow citizens. I met dozens of such Protestants, people of overwhelming pacifist good will who had developed a contempt for flags and fights in defense of them. Catholics in the same position were few (like their equivalents, they had generally lived or traveled at length abroad); and while they might see the futility of continued violence as a method, they have never doubted the decent motives of most of those on their own side who were still fighting. The Catholics have a corner on decent motives. Individual Republican mavericks seldom seem maverick enough to embrace world citizenship. The Catholics have *suffered*; there is a score to settle. The Protestants as a whole have not; they can afford magnanimity.

But the Republicans' refusal to consider seriously the Protestant mentality is creating potential havoc. The Protestant anarchy let loose after the Anglo-Irish Agreement, leading from protest to intimidation to rioting to a renewal of sectarian assassination (all symptomatic of a profound disaffection), is lethal for the society as a whole. Republicans have little to say about this; they just hope the anarchy will help them to destabilize the situation further, to a point where it is intolerable to the British. But destabilization can work against Catholics, too.

And for all its ideas about a socialist republic, Sinn Fein forgets about socialism when it comes to the Protestants. In a contribution to the book *Ireland After Britain*, Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams has extraordinarily little to say on the subject. "I presume that if partition goes as part of a British withdrawal," he writes, "then regardless of what sort of institutions are left, there will be a coming together of people who have the same class interests over the whole of Ireland." But class interests don't play a part in people's thinking. Adams goes on to say, in his only specific reference to Protestants, "When Britain goes, the whole ballgame changes. We would have a new 32 County Ireland. That would mean for one thing having a sizeable national minority—that is, the Protestants—who would need to have their understandable but misguided fears about civil and religious liberties answered." Why can't somebody start allaying these misguided fears now? Why wait? Why can't their concerns be addressed?

By the same token, when Loyalists discuss a future, independent Ulster with Protestants and Catholics living happily ever after, they spare not one thought for present Catholic fears, making only vague suggestions that in their own brand of socialism, whatever that is, the interests of all people will be protected. What are they waiting for? How about, for a start, letting Catholics work beside them? Or not killing them?

It doesn't require much imagination to come up with such questions, and yet in Belfast one is looked upon as some sort of freak if one voices them. The irresistible conclusion is that neither group takes its own proposals very seriously. A further conclusion is that most plans for peace are mirages: only plans for war occupy these people's minds. Maurice James Craig's famous couplet "It's to hell with the future and live on the past:/May the Lord in His mercy be kind to Belfast" seems only partly true: everyone lives thoroughly in the present, as it is informed by the past. But Craig certainly had it right about the future.

The overwhelming feeling I got in Northern Ireland was that the war was going to continue because so many people

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had a stake in it. For some the stake is idealism, for some it's personal profit, for some it's power, for some it's their version of "Ireland for the Irish," or of socialism. For a kid-rioter of my acquaintance, it's just the "crack" [thrill]. Some fight for the status it gives them in the fight; even the people obsessed with peace would be out of a job if it came. And ironically, the status quo, if not the war, means survival for many. If Britain left, it would take away its social security structure. Public expenditure now accounts for more than 70 percent of the gross domestic product (43 percent in the United Kingdom as a whole); 45 percent of those in work at all are employed in the public sector, i.e., are paid by the Exchequer. Large numbers of jobholders, from prison warders to glaziers, are direct beneficiaries of the Troubles.

Of course, choices still exist for people caught in the situation. Indisputably the most awful hardship and misery are to be found, almost all of it the fault of locale. Why not move away? Many young people are forced to go to England seeking work, but no one you talk to wants to emigrate to either of the countries offering citizenship. Of other, more general choices, there is no mass movement to integrate education, the most obvious way to halt the handing down of hatred from generation to generation. State public schools are almost entirely Protestant; the same state supports the private Catholic schools attended by virtually all Catholic children. But you find few people of either side who lament the situation, let alone work to change it. If the war oppresses them so much, it is hard to think why; the political and religious alternatives available seem to lack popular appeal.

Adding this up, there seems little to be said for the never-ending procession of experts seeking a "solution." Everyone who is not terminally bored with Northern Ireland (admittedly a large group) seems to be trying to devise a way to help the people there out of their plight. Is it not presumptuous to do their thinking for them? Any citizen who wants to get out of this "plight" has to change the way he or she acts or votes, and no one does. Therefore it seems sensible to assume he or she can't see how to, or doesn't want to. It is a strange place where peace is altogether unknown in the lifetime of nearly 40 percent of the population, but Northern Ireland fills the bill; and like everyone else, its inhabitants prefer the familiar. "The people do not believe in change," wrote one experienced correspondent, "neither in its possibility, nor in its desirability."

"Let me have war, say I," wrote Shakespeare in *Coriolanus*; "It exceeds peace as far as day does night; it's spritely, waking, audible and full of vent. Peace is a very apoplexy, lethargy, mulled, deaf, sleepy, insensible . . . and it makes men hate one another." "The man who has renounced war has renounced a grand life," wrote Nietzsche. Nostalgia for the blitz is still nearly universal among Londoners old enough to have lived through it; the Falklands war had all the flags out for several weeks. Fighting a war is certainly a much more exciting raison d'être than none at all, which is what confronts so many people in the British Isles of the 1980s. What is so enviable about the "peace" the rest of us live in? What is preferable about sharing the unemployment, riots, crime, welfare cuts and economic hopelessness of the Northern Irish but not having their reasons for getting up in the morning—their grand cause, their commitment, sense of purpose, clarity? "Something great got hold of you," said an 80-year-old Englishman of World War II.

My conclusions about the Northern Ireland war are actually on the bright side, from the point of view of those caught in it. One of the more ghoulish sets of statistics to emerge from the Troubles shows an inverse ratio between the homicide and suicide rates—make of this what one will. The incidence of suicide fell by a quarter in the early 1970s and has grown again only very gradually. The same is true of the rate of depressive illness. On a more positive scale, the people, when asked, turn out to be (incredible though it seems) the happiest on earth. According to a Gallup "Values Study" conducted worldwide in the 1980s, 39 percent of the people of Northern Ireland define themselves as "very happy" (compared, for example, to 10 percent of West Germans and Italians, and 15 percent of Japanese). Perhaps what makes them happy is a fierce commitment to a cause transcending themselves. The world of my own dreams has no war in it. But what if we are stuck between war and a peace with no dreams? □

ME AND DUKAKIS

A Sort of Memoir

PHILIP GREEN

The overall picture the left has of Gov. Michael Dukakis is one of cautious tolerance at best; but more frequently it is one of disaffection amounting to real hostility. Now that "the Duke" seems, more and more, to be one of the most serious presidential contenders among what political commentators are calling "the Seven Dwarfs," what was a largely internal debate about neoliberalism in Massachusetts is of national interest. My own contribution to this discussion takes the form of a personal memoir quite unrelated (on the surface, at any rate) to the familiar mixed bag of Dukakis positions—good on capital punishment, abortion rights, Central America and nuclear power; bad on human services expenditures, welfare policy and gay and lesbian rights.

For two years in the 1950s Mike Dukakis and I attended Swarthmore College together. During those years we were also members of Students for Democratic Action, then the campus auxiliary of Americans for Democratic Action.

Philip Green is Sophia Smith Professor of Government at Smith College, and author of Retrieving Democracy: In Search of Civic Equality *(Rowman & Allanheld).*

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That is a somewhat self-serving way to put it, as depictions of the past go, since in fact I was only a member but Mike—at least during my senior, his junior year—was chair: not an irrelevant distinction, as we shall see. The A.D.A., of course, epitomized what should properly be called the left version of 1950s cold war liberalism; a faintly critical but wholly proper politics in which Hubert Humphrey functioned as God and Eleanor Roosevelt as His Mother. My own politics were probably typical. In successive debates in junior high, high school and college, I had defended violence by picketing coal miners and called for nationalization of the mines; supported Harry Truman against Henry Wallace; advocated that the United States develop the hydrogen bomb; and attacked Sidney Hook's notion of "Heresy, Yes—Conspiracy, No" which entailed denying the full range of civil liberties and academic freedoms to Communists. Mike's politics, as it turned out, were not quite so typical.

In the fall of 1953, a new student organization was formed at Swarthmore and chartered by the student government. It called itself the Forum for Free Speech. To some of us on campus, two things about this new organization were noteworthy. First, its officers seemed to be the same people who led the S.D.A.'s more left-wing competitor, the Young Progressives of America, final remnant of the Progressive Party of 1948. Second, the Forum for Free Speech extended its initial invitation to speak to Carl Marzani, who was, depending on your stance, either a victim of McCarthyism or one of the few true subversives/Communists who had been discovered in and expelled from the Federal government. In his book *The Committee*, Walter Goodman mentions Marzani as one of six men whose sponsorship or support of an organization made its "concealed control" by the Communist Party "self-evident." That characterization undoubtedly sums up the view held by cold war liberals such as myself at the time.

As we all believed in free speech and civil liberties, and would probably have agreed that less of those were available to the left than to anyone else, the Forum for Free Speech was at worst a minor provocation—initially. But sometime after its founding the Forum committed, or rather was at the center of, a major provocation. It compounded the aggravating invitation to Marzani by inviting as its second guest speaker that well-known (as we put it) Communist fronter and fellow traveler, I.F. Stone: Its hidden agenda now stood revealed for all to see. We awoke one morning to discover from the student newspaper, the *Swarthmore Phoenix*, that Stone's appearance was being co-sponsored not only by the Young Progressives of America, as might have been expected, but also by the S.D.A., and the campus exploded. (At least, the parts of the campus relevant to politically active students exploded.) An emergency meeting of the S.D.A. was demanded by some of us, to find out how this situation had come about. The answer, of course, was simple: The chair had brought it about. He had made the decision, perhaps in concert with one or two other officers, to have the S.D.A. listed as co-sponsor of Stone, and he defended this decision as a proper exercise of his authority.

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Until that moment, Mike Dukakis, in his incarnation as chair of the S.D.A., had been known on campus principally for his committed leadership in two campaigns in which we liberals were all united: the campaigns to desegregate the local barbershop and to abolish fraternities (wretched anachronisms that persist at Swarthmore to this day). Now, though the rebellion that occurred did not take place within the S.D.A., it was certainly a rebellion against Dukakis. Ostensibly, the attack was directed against the Forum for Free Speech itself, with S.D.A. members arguing on both sides of the issue.

In a premature version of participatory democracy, a mass meeting was called, open to the entire campus. Its purpose was to decide the fate of the Forum, a chartered student organization whose legitimacy was being called into question. Roughly one hundred students crowded into that meeting—an incredible number, given that the size of the student body was about 900. There was no "right" or "left" to line up on: The moderator of the meeting (who that was, memory fails) stood or sat in the middle of a large study room, and members of the two factions sat or stood on opposite sides of the room. One grouping was a bizarre yet in the end quite logical amalgam: the right wing of the S.D.A., a few Trotskyists, a few anarchists and the liberal wing of the Young Republicans. The other comprised the left wing of the S.D.A., led by Dukakis, and the Y.P.A./Forum group—those we called the fellow travelers.

The debate was led largely by me and by Mike. The argument of the right was that the Forum for Free Speech was named not just inaptly but illegitimately. It was not a forum for free speech but a forum for left-wing speech, and the student government should not charter a lie, nor should the S.D.A. sponsor one. The argument of the left was that the only free speech under assault in the United States was that of the kind of people who were being invited under the Forum's auspices, and furthermore, that the people who had organized the Forum were actively dedicated, as others of us perhaps were not, to doing something to promote that freedom.

It was not merely a theoretical discussion but also a very precise organizational debate: A series of amendments to the Forum's charter were put by us to the meeting, the cumulative effect of which was to take the organization away from the people who had founded it (as we had been taught to "take away" liberal organizations from the "Communists and fellow travelers"). Each of the amendments, one after the other, was passed by an identical margin, something like 53 to 47 or 51 to 49, the voters confronting each other grimly from our opposite sides of the meeting room. Political discipline—enforced by me and Mike—showed itself to be incredibly firm.

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When it was all over, "liberalism" had triumphed and "totalitarianism" had been defeated. The Forum for Free Speech was made safe for democracy, a new and restrictive charter had been written for it, its board carefully redefined so that almost every *soi-disant* political tendency under the sun would have a representative co-opted onto it. A new board, so redefined, had been elected on the spot, consisting entirely of the winners. Mike Dukakis remained, somewhat repudiated, at the helm of the S.D.A.

The first act of the newly reconstituted Forum was to invite as its next speaker—I still don't quite believe this, as I was on the new board—that well-known victim of political persecution, William F. Buckley Jr. I do know that I did not go to hear Buckley, and I wouldn't have for anything but an extremely large sum of money, since he stands for everything mean-spirited and oppressive in the political life of twentieth-century America. Later that year I graduated, and though the Forum remained in existence for some time, I have no idea what course it took thereafter.

I finally went to hear Marzani speak, but it was at Princeton University seven or eight years later. He was invited by the Princeton chapter of the Committee to Abolish HUAC, which was guided by H.H. Wilson, who had no illusions about whose free speech might be in danger. Marzani gave the best account I had yet heard of the roots of American foreign policy in hysterical anticommunist interventionism. At about that time also, I began to subscribe to "I.F. Stone's Weekly," having discovered that it was the only available source of news (unless one read the York, Pennsylvania, *Gazette*) that did not process information into disinformation. I remained a subscriber until Izzy, to the despair of his readers, was finally forced to abandon America's finest journalistic enterprise.

In the fall of 1982 the trustees of Smith College invited Jeane Kirkpatrick to be the college's annual commencement speaker and to receive an honorary degree. Several hundred students and faculty mobilized against that provocation, and at a mass meeting of protest I spoke on behalf of the assembled faculty members. We demanded that the honorary degree award be revoked and let the students know that although principles of academic freedom argued against revoking the invitation to speak, it was certainly not out of place for us to plan together how best to make our outrage felt, were Kirkpatrick to appear and defile the students' commencement. A colleague and I wrote a lengthy memorandum to Smith's president and the trustees, arguing that an analysis of Kirkpatrick's works showed that as a scholar she was nothing but an apologist and propagandist, and did not meet the requirements for an honorary degree. Shortly thereafter, the president of the college told Kirkpatrick that it would be impossible to guarantee her security, and Kirkpatrick angrily withdrew from the ceremony.

A few weeks later I appeared on a popular call-in radio program out of New York City, debating Diane Ravitch, author of *The Great School Wars*, and arguing to Ravitch's evident fury that Kirkpatrick had in no way been deprived of her free speech, that she was in fact giving several com-

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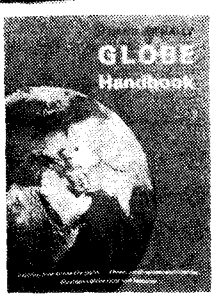

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mencement addresses elsewhere in the nation and that people of her position and power had much more of a chance to make themselves heard than real dissenters, whose voices genuinely are in need of protection.

I've met Mike Dukakis only twice since we attended Swarthmore, each time at a crowded campaign reception, which did not seem the appropriate time or place to bring up old stories. I don't know what he thought about the Kirkpatrick affair, which many viewed as a grave debacle for the image of higher education in Massachusetts. But I am forced to ask myself this question: Were we to bring Swarthmore, 1953, to Smith College, 1987, which side of the meeting room would I be standing on today? And although I have little idea what Mike's motives were then (and little enough idea as to my own), from time to time I wonder whether he knew something then about the importance of nurturing left-wing speech when it is under attack in a capitalist society that all of us on the other side of the room didn't know. And whatever it was he knew, considering that in retrospect his position then has perhaps stood the test of time better than my own, I wonder if he still knows it. □

Money, Drugs

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

bade the Reagan Administration to provide them, "directly or indirectly," with any military aid.

The *contras* were well aware they were dealing with drug traffickers. They even promised to use their influence with high-ranking U.S. officials to help the drug runners thwart prosecution, according to interviews with *contra* leaders. Rebel groups involved were closely supervised by the Central Intelligence Agency and by the White House network set up by Lieut. Col. Oliver North.

North, for example, received a memorandum in April 1985 from his trusted courier Robert Owen, stating that some *contra* leaders "are questionable because of past indiscretions" involving "drug running." Owen named two prominent *contras* in his memo, one of whom was eventually charged by Costa Rican authorities with drug offenses. The other, never charged, continued to play a major role in the White House arms network.

Apparently North and his associates accepted the drug problem as a price to be paid for conducting the war. And they were not alone in this. Justice Department officials were told repeatedly that the drug link existed, and chose to turn a blind eye, even though the department did prosecute some of the drug dealers involved.

Among the important *contras* in cahoots with drug dealers was Octaviano Cesar. His brother Alfredo, until recently a *contra* colleague, is one of six *contra* leaders who united three months ago under a new, U.S.-approved umbrella organization called the Nicaraguan Resistance. Octaviano Cesar is well known in Costa Rica for boasting of close ties to the C.I.A. and some high U.S. officials. Whether or not that is true, he certainly was under C.I.A.–White House supervision. Alfredo says Octaviano resigned from the movement this spring because of charges made publicly about him by drug kingpin George Morales.

Until last year, Morales was the Miami importer and distributor for the largest of Colombia's cocaine cartels. He is now beginning a sixteen-year Federal prison term. Acknowledging that he hopes to get his sentence reduced, he has talked for hours on end to many reporters, including myself, and testified last month before a Senate foreign relations subcommittee. Much of his story appears to be untrue—which is unfortunate, for his wilder overstatements have distracted attention from the verifiable facts.

Morales claims that the C.I.A. approached him in 1983 with a plan to smuggle dope to finance the war against the Nicaraguan government. While American agents were active in helping finance the Indochina war through heroin trafficking, Morales—and others promulgating the charge—have yet to present corroborating evidence that the C.I.A. *arranged* any cocaine traffic in Central America.

What the known facts suggest is that Morales sought out the *contras* to save himself after he was indicted in March 1984. This is the story told by Marta Healey, a Nicaraguan-born woman now living in Miami. Morales agrees that it was Healey who arranged his first meeting with some *contra* leaders who he says represented the C.I.A.

Healey is the former wife of *contra* leader Adolfo Chamorro; she later married Richard Healey, a pilot in Morales's drug syndicate. She and Morales say that through her efforts he had a series of meetings with: Octaviano Cesar, who was a childhood friend of hers; Chamorro; and Edén Pastora, the well-known Sandinista commander who left Nicaragua and became leader of *contra* forces based in Costa Rica (he recently quit the movement to work as a fisherman). None of these former *contra* leaders have disputed that the meetings with Morales took place. (Cesar ducks the question, Chamorro says he can't remember, and Pastora, through a spokesman, says he broke off dealings with Morales when he learned Morales was a drug dealer, though documents show the dealings continued for another six months.)

Morales, Marta Healey explains, was not seeking help with drug smuggling; he was doing quite well on his own. Rather, she says, he wanted to donate planes and cash to help the *contras*, and asked her for an introduction. Her story is uniformly supported by other *contra* leaders and by documents. Moreover, such generosity by Morales fits the historical pattern: drug traffickers who involve themselves directly or peripherally in C.I.A.-supported activity stand a good chance of dodging legal difficulties. The traffickers know this. But the fact remains that the *contras* encouraged Morales, boasting of their clout with the C.I.A. According

Jonathan Kwitny is a reporter who covers international stories. He is the author of Endless Enemies: The Making of an Unfriendly World. *This article was adapted and updated from* The Crimes of Patriots: A True Tale of Dope, Dirty Money and the CIA, *which will be published next month by W. W. Norton.*

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to Pastora's chief aide and spokesman, Carol Prado, Morales is correct in claiming he was told that the charges against him would eventually be dropped as a reward for his help. (Prado says he wasn't aware of the promise when it was made.)

Morales's donations out of his vast drug profits included one contribution of more than a quarter-million dollars in small bills for the *contra* supply system being run by Oliver North during the Boland amendment aid cutoff. The money was paid via a middleman to a Memphis, Tennessee, aircraft broker, Sam Vires, as payment for a Cessna 404 he procured. The plane was used in North's *contra* supply network. (Vires says the agreed-on price was $264,500, but that on counting the bills, he found he'd been shorted $10, so the bill of sale reads $264,490.) At the same time, according to a Justice Department indictment, Morales was smuggling huge quantities of cocaine into Miami. (Vires says airplanes are often paid for in cash, and he didn't know it was drug money.)

Aircraft refueling receipts tell an interesting story about another Morales airplane, an illegally registered, drug-financed C-47, worth about $100,000. In 1984 and 1985, that plane was repeatedly piloted into and out of Ilopango Air Force Base in El Salvador by Marcos Aguado. Aguado was a *contra* leader who arranged arms shipments with the White House network—he was so identified by Prado, Pastora's lieutenant; by former *contra* business administrator Roger Monge; by former *contra* parachute expert Raphael Espinosa; by another former *contra* officer whose name is withheld here to protect a third party; and by John Hull, an American rancher in Costa Rica. Hull was active in North's supply network, and his whole family was close to Aguado.

The *contras* say that weapons were unloaded from Morales's plane at Ilopango for transfer to smaller planes, which then flew to Hull's ranch or to *contra* camps inside Nicaragua. Documents show that the plane, with its illegal, untraceable tail number, was refueled by the Salvadoran Air Force.

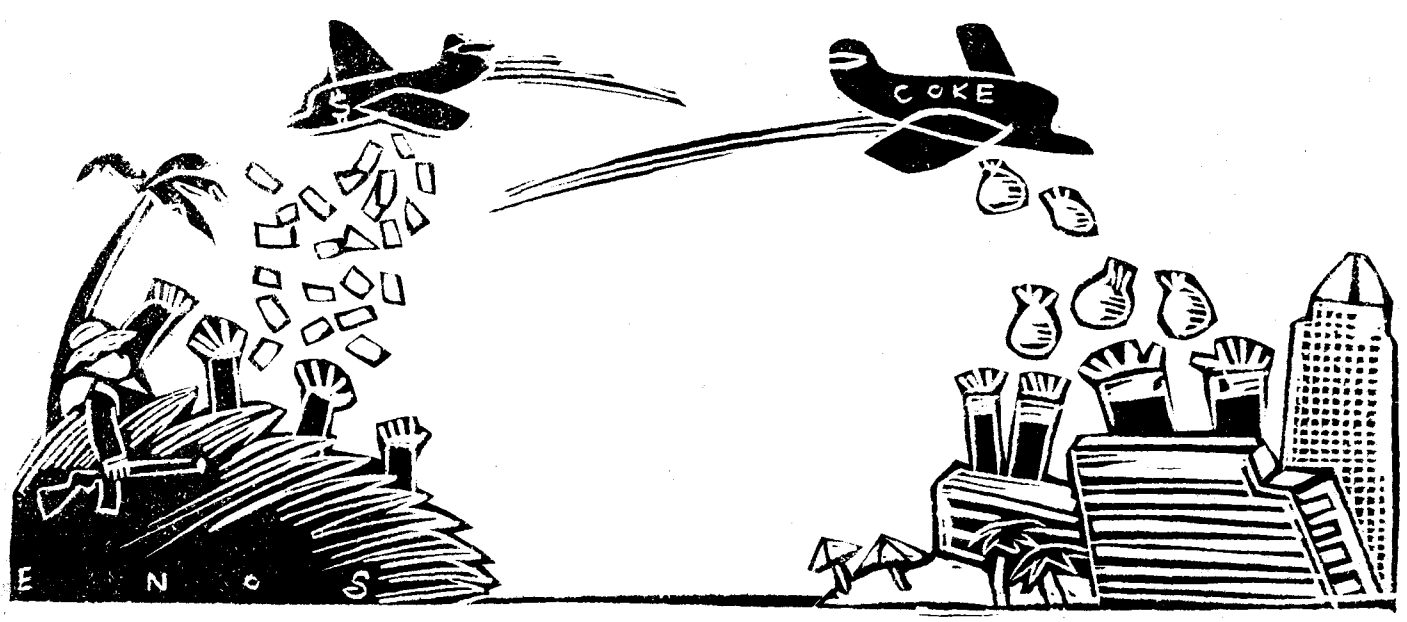
Another pilot of the C-47, according to refueling receipts, was Geraldo Duran. Duran was publicly identified by both U.S. and Costa Rican authorities last year as a cocaine trafficker. Duran has also worked as a pilot for almost all the prominent *contra* forces.

Morales contends that his C-47 would continue on from Ilopango to Colombia, where it was reloaded with drugs before flying back to Florida. This assertion is entirely plausible, and is even somewhat corroborated by Justice Department charges that Morales was importing cocaine at the time for the largest Colombian cartel. The Justice Department charges, though, don't specify the flight routes that Morales's drug planes took.

Ilopango is the main air base used for U.S. support of the Salvadoran government and of the *contras*. The U.S. Air Force told me it doesn't keep track of traffic in and out of Ilopango, but a Congressional committee or law-enforcement agency with subpoena power might still be able to find out where Morales's C-47 went after it left the base.

According to Morales, the *contras* and others, Morales also donated a helicopter and cash (a disputed amount) to the cause. It's true that the *contras* known to be involved with Morales were in the Edén Pastora group, which the C.I.A had turned against in the spring of 1984. But several principals, including Aguado, Octaviano Cesar and Chamorro, soon left Pastora and stayed in the C.I.A.'s good graces.

Morales was not the only major drug importer with a *contra* deal. Separately, in one of the biggest cocaine cases ever uncovered on the West Coast, two *contras* based in Costa Rica persuaded the Justice Department to return more than $36,000 in apparent drug profits seized from a friend of theirs, a drug dealer named Julio Zavala, in 1983. Drug agents seized the money along with 430 pounds of cocaine, a military rifle and a grenade. But the Justice Department gave back the cash after the two *contra* leaders certified that it belonged to their organization and had been given to Zavala to buy supplies for the war. One of the *contra* leaders, Vicente Rappacciolli Marquíz, has since denied giving Zavala the $36,000, saying he lied about it to help Zavala.



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Zavala subsequently told reporters that he gave $500,000, mostly drug profits, to the *contras*. While convicted drug dealers are prone to exaggeration—and Zavala, like Morales, is trying to get his sentence reduced—it seems clear that Zavala must have done something to make the *contras* so eager to help him get back the $36,000 (which, as illicit drug proceeds, would have belonged to U.S. taxpayers).

Another big international drug trafficker, Norwin Meneses-Canterero, provided help that was gratefully received by Adolfo Calero's Nicaraguan Democratic Force, the largest *contra* organization, according to reporter Seth Rosenfeld of the *San Francisco Examiner*. Meneses is a Nicaraguan who has spent the 1980s in Costa Rica and San Francisco. Though never charged in court, Meneses has been described by the Drug Enforcement Administration as a major smuggler, and Rosenfeld has reported that Meneses admitted in an interview that he had trafficked in the past, though he also said that he had stopped. Rosenfeld quoted Calero and other members of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force as saying that Meneses had bankrolled four *contra* functions and supplied a truck and video equipment.

In Miami, more serious charges have come from two witnesses I am persuaded were truthful: Jesus Garcia and Steven Carr, who worked in a branch of the *contra* supply network that was organized by Cuban-Americans. Garcia and Carr have said that they saw cocaine stored alongside weapons destined for the *contras*. Other witnesses, including Jose and Hilda Coutin—he is a jailed Miami gun dealer who worked for the *contras*; she is his wife and ex-partner—also say that the Cuban-American *contra* supporters whom Garcia and Carr worked for trafficked in drugs. The Coutins have much to hide, but they were in a position to know that.

The Cuban-Americans operate a frozen shrimp import business, which is allegedly used as a cover for cocaine smuggling. They worked closely on *contra* aid matters with John Hull, the American rancher in Costa Rica, the country from which the shrimp are exported. The evidence of drug trafficking, while impressive, is inconclusive. But it is hard to think of a legitimate reason why the U.S. Attorney's Office in Miami never settled the issue by investigating the shrimp company.

I asked the U.S. Attorney's Office in Miami about the allegations of Morales, Carr and Garcia. Carr had died by then, of an apparent cocaine overdose, and was quickly dismissed as a liar. As for Morales and Garcia, the office supplied me with a chronology of events purporting to demonstrate that they, too, had lied, and were merely telling stories planted by persons opposed to the war. I checked the chronology and found that at some critical points, it was incorrect. When I presented my evidence to the U.S. Attorney's Office, I was given new and different reasons why the allegations were not being investigated. I checked those statements, and they, too, proved to be false. That was in early 1987. (Today, years after the various charges were made, the Justice Department's Miami office says that a grand jury is investigating a backlog of allegations of illegal activity by the *contra* supply network.)

The U.S. government did more than merely reject the initial allegations of *contra* involvement in drug smuggling: It quickly warned the *contra* supply team—the potential targets of an investigation—of the threat. John Hull tacitly acknowledged to me that he was warned in early 1985 by a National Security Council source of a potential investigation. Then, after receiving additional advice from the U.S. Embassy in Costa Rica, he confidently declined to talk to three Justice Department agents who visited him there.

The original report of a leak to Hull came from a former *contra* mercenary, Peter Glibbery. Glibbery's other statements over the past two years have been corroborated in such detail by testimony before the recent House and Senate select committees that he must be regarded as highly believable. In an interview, Hull said he wouldn't dispute Glibbery's report of a leak, and acknowledged that he had sources at the N.S.C. who might well have told him such a thing; but he pleaded a poor memory for details.

(Interestingly, Glibbery weighs in against the charges made by Morales and others that big cocaine shipments were flown in and out of Hull's ranch in Costa Rica. Glibbery worked there for nearly two months as Hull's trusted confidant, and while he describes plenty of apparently illegal weapons activity, he says he saw no sign of drug trafficking.)

Just who on the N.S.C. staff warned Hull and presumably others that they might be investigated isn't known. But Oliver North is a candidate. Lawrence Spivey, an American filmmaker who worked with the *contra* supply operation, says that in early 1985 he saw Federal Bureau of Investigation memorandums from Miami about the drug-smuggling allegations in North's office. Spivey's account is quite straightforward and believable.

The *contras*' patrons in the Reagan Administration apparently knew about the drug involvement and, while not encouraging it, wanted to conceal it. North certainly had been told about more informal allegations. For example, he had received the previously mentioned April 1985 memorandum from his liaison Robert Owen. That memo states that *contra* leader Jose Robelo had a "potential involvement with drug running and the sales of goods provided by USG [the U.S. government]." (I know that Robelo coordinated *contra* supply missions and now lives in a fine house in San José, Costa Rica, but I don't know of anything else to support Owen's accusation.)

Owen was more blunt about *contra* Sebastian Gonzalez, who he said was "now involved in drug running out of Panama"—a warning borne out when Gonzales was charged with such activity in Costa Rica. Owen wrote another memo, dated February 10, 1986, about a *contra* plane that had been used to run drugs.

The House and Senate select committees, which uncovered the memos and other evidence of a drug problem, didn't question Owen or North about the drug charges. Nor did they ask why the Reagan Administration contracted with a firm called Vortex Aircraft Sales and Leasing to fly so-called humanitarian assistance to the *contras* when the firm's then-vice president Michael Palmer was under indictment for marijuana trafficking.

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The *contras*, in short, had close dealings with drug smugglers. They were operating out of remote airstrips and they knew that U.S. authorities were intentionally looking the other way. Considering also the relative splendor in which some *contra* veterans now live, it is easy to speculate that drugs were sometimes smuggled on return flights during military supply operations. There are two plausible allegations of such flights making the rounds—one told by a woman known as Wanda Doe regarding Southern Air Transport planes, and that of George Morales regarding the C-47 aircraft. But there is no corroborated instance of drug backhauling on *contra* supply flights.

There are, of course, some widely publicized accusations that U.S. officials (including those in the supposedly "private" *contra* arms network) actually arranged and warehoused cocaine shipments to finance the war. This theory is advanced most flamboyantly by Washington lawyer Daniel Sheehan, who founded and runs the Christic Institute.

Sheehan is an engaging speaker and fund-raiser and has had the courage (and astuteness) to attack some armor-plated targets—most of whom, as individuals or small groups, have done some reprehensible deeds over the years. But Sheehan is now alleging a mammoth conspiracy by these men to support a shadow government by drug dealing and illegal arms sales since the 1950s. He may yet prove a case, but so far his evidence, if any, is well hidden.

For a year I have repeatedly asked Sheehan to provide sources or documents to corroborate his contentions. On several occasions Sheehan has promised to make sources available, but has always backed out, citing danger to the sources or other complications. This is reminiscent of the late 1970s, when Sheehan promised to provide reporters with proof that Karen Silkwood was killed because she had discovered an international plot to smuggle bomb-grade material out of nuclear fuel plants around the country. Sheehan did not produce a single witness.

In news reports, the allegations of drug smuggling activity by the U.S. government have basically been supported by the statements of three imprisoned drug smugglers: George Morales, Gary Betzner and Michael Tolliver. Sheehan obviously believes them, and he is not alone. Major television

THE CASE OF 'MR. GLENN'

Last fall, Guillermo Fernandez-R., an editor and reporter for the conservative Costa Rican newspaper *La Nación*, wrote a monumental monthlong series of articles exposing drug trafficking and corruption in his country. Among the many who praised it was the U.S. Ambassador to Costa Rica then, Lewis Tambs.

Fernandez-R. exposed the ties of Colombian and Panamanian drug syndicates to corrupt Costa Rican officials, and to some *contra* supporters. Among other things, it was Fernandez-R. who tracked down *contra* leader Vicente Rappacciolli Marquiz, who admitted he had lied to the U.S. Justice Department to help a dope smuggler retrieve $36,000 in seized cash.

But Fernandez-R.'s strangest tale was told to me this spring in a telephone interview (he is in hiding after receiving death threats from Colombian smugglers). The tale concerns John Hull, an American rancher in Costa Rica.

Fernandez-R. visited Hull during his investigations last November and questioned him about the rumored *contra* drug links. Later, leaving on a trip to Washington to conduct interviews, Fernandez-R. says he was stunned to find that Hull had called his secretary, learned of his travel arrangements and bought a seat near him on the airplane. In Washington, the two were met by a retired Army colonel recently stationed in Central America, Joseph Yurko, who owns a farm in Costa Rica near Hull's.

Hull and Yurko took Fernandez-R. to Yurko's Virginia home. There they were joined by Robert Owen, Lieut. Col. Oliver North's liaison. The Americans tried to persuade Fernandez-R. to leave Washington for Hull's Indiana farm, where they said he could be better informed.

(Hull insists he had arranged in advance to go with Fernandez-R. to Washington to help investigate the allegations. He and Yurko confirm the chronology as Fernandez-R. gives it, but deny there was any attempt to intimidate him. They say they were trying to help. Owen isn't talking to reporters.)

On the second day, after a night at Yurko's, Fernandez-R. says he insisted on going back to Washington. There, he says, he was approached by a strange "Mr. Glenn," an installer of security systems, who offered more "help." Back in Costa Rica, he says he was stunned to have Mr. Glenn approach him again, with an offer of free security systems for his home and newspaper.

"It was obvious he was trying to make a deal with me," Fernandez-R. says, not to print something "that might embarrass them and the U.S. government. What bothers me is why these persons were so interested in what I was investigating."

Fernandez-R. says he has since identified Mr. Glenn as Glenn Robinette, a former Central Intelligence Agency officer who installed a $13,800 security system last year on the private home of North, at the suggestion of Maj. Gen. Richard Secord. Robinette testified about the installation before the House and Senate Iran/*contra* select committees. Robinette also helped tail two U.S. journalists in Costa Rica, Martha Honey and Tony Avirgan, who are suing Hull, Secord and others. Robinette's attorney says he won't confirm or deny Fernandez-R.'s story, which is published here for the first time.

—J.K.

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and print news organizations quoted them uncritically.

But one of the two airplanes Morales and Betzner have said they used for the alleged cocaine shipments—the Cessna 404 referred to above—was not in their possession until October 23, 1984, according to the records of Sam Vires (the broker who obtained it) and Dennis Martin, the Fort Lauderdale aircraft servicer whose company fixed it up and then maintained it. That is more than three months after Morales and Betzner have repeatedly said they used the plane to fly drugs from Hull's ranch.

In Costa Rica, I carefully measured the two grass airstrips Morales and Betzner say they used on and near Hull's ranch. In both cases the runways were more than 1,000 feet shorter than they said. I interviewed the manufacturers of the aircraft and engines they say they used, and other aviation experts about runway requirements. From what those experts said, the takeoffs in cocaine-laden planes that Morales and Betzner say were made from the airstrips would be either impossible or so risky they would not likely have been undertaken by plan. The *contras* describe Hull as extremely cautious about the size of aircraft he would allow to land, fearful that an accident might expose the secret arms deliveries.

Tolliver's charges cannot be refuted so conclusively. He claims that he flew a load of marijuana, supplied to him by the C.I.A., to Homestead Air Force Base in Florida, where he left it with the Air Force. He says he was paid $75,000 and took a taxi home. Tolliver's charges are corroborated only by his knowledge of certain details about Homestead, which he could have picked up in other ways; he is a slender thread on which to hang so weighty an accusation.

If drugs were not actually carried under U.S. government supervision, however, that should not detract from the fact that U.S.-supervised covert activities were funded with money from drug trafficking, and law enforcement seems to have been perverted to that end.

To be understood, the *contras*' drug connection needs to be put in the context of the history of U.S. government involvement in narcotics trafficking. The two primary networks for importing heroin into the United States since World War II grew out of our own covert operations.

The first was the legendary "French Connection," operating out of Marseilles. In the late 1940s, the U.S. government worked secretly and successfully to replace the leftist leaders of the Marseilles dock unions, out of fear that the unions might interfere with American shipping in a crisis. But the antileftists we helped put in power in Marseilles either were then, or soon became, tools of the Corsican Mafia.

The second network developed in the so-called Golden Triangle of Burma, Laos and Thailand, the main source of the world's opium in recent decades. The Golden Triangle opium factory was largely the byproduct of U.S. efforts to overthrow the government of China after 1949, and later to win the war in Indochina. While there's no evidence that any American official planned to create a drug empire, there is overwhelming evidence that U.S. operatives in the 1950s and 1960s nurtured the heroin syndicates and helped export the drug to aid the war effort.

Drug importation into the United States has similarly been facilitated by U.S. covert operations intended to fight a perceived Communist threat in Latin America. For example, in 1972 the brother of Panamanian dictator Gen. Omar Torrijos was secretly indicted in New York for smuggling heroin; he was to be arrested on his next arrival at Kennedy Airport. But he was saved from that fate and allowed to continue running a heroin syndicate when the chief U.S. drug enforcer, John Ingersoll, for foreign policy reasons, flew to Panama to warn the dictator about what was happening.

One of the biggest Federal drug investigations of the 1970s, involving the Miami-based firm World Finance Corporation, was aborted when the C.I.A. acted to protect most of the suspects—its agents. Against this background, one cannot dismiss the allegations of drug smugglers like Morales, even while recognizing that they will try to stretch the truth. Clearly, with the advent of the main U.S. "covert" operation of the 1980s—the *contra* war in Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Honduras—the drug connection has persisted.

Confronted with this problem, the government sought to shift the blame to the Sandinistas. President Reagan, Secretary of State George Shultz and others in the Administration charged in the press and on national television that the top leaders of Nicaragua made a deal with the Colombian cartel to refuel its airplanes at a military airfield near Managua, and even to refine cocaine there for shipment to the United States. But the Administration's story was invented.

The airfield President Reagan and others referred to, Los Brasiles, is not a military airfield. Administration spokesmen charged that a high-ranking Sandinista official named Federico Vaughan directed the smuggling; but the only testimony verifying Vaughan's status as a high-ranking Sandinista came from Barry Seal, one of the biggest drug smugglers in the United States at the time. The Nicaraguan government has denied that Vaughan was ever a high-ranking official; the Justice Department says there are no records that he was one, other than Seal's testimony, and Vaughan can't be found. And there is nothing but surmise to tie any other of the named Sandinista officials to the purported drug operation.

The Justice Department openly concedes that without Seal's testimony it has no case against the Sandinistas. Seal, facing a likely twenty-year prison term on two major convictions, received probation in return for his efforts. He was shot to death in Baton Rouge in February 1986, and the government has accused several Colombians of the crime.

Whatever one thinks of the Nicaraguan government, both the Justice Department and the C.I.A. have reported that Nicaragua's record on drug trafficking is much better than that of its neighbors, our allies. In fact, except for one load of cocaine that Seal testified he flew into and then out of Nicaragua, the Justice Department admits that it is unaware of a single drug shipment from Nicaragua to the United States. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Grand Designs

ELIOT WEINBERGER

THE ARTS AT BLACK MOUNTAIN COLLEGE. *By Mary Emma Harris. MIT Press. 314 pp. $50.*

Only in America could an art school be imagined as a form of utopia, yet that is precisely how Black Mountain College (1933-1956) lingers in the memory. Set in a magnificent corner of the Blue Ridge Mountains, it was a community where students and teachers lived together, raised their own food, built their own dormitories and classrooms, and jointly determined their courses of study and the courses of their lives. It was an outpost of aestheticism through the Depression, two hot wars and the cold war, and it attracted an extraordinary collection of European refugees from fascism and American refugees from capitalism. It was the kind of place where Josef Albers determined the way the cans should be stacked in the kitchen, and where the evening's entertainment might be a play with music by John Cage and dances by Merce Cunningham, sets by Elaine and Willem de Kooning, costumes by Richard Lippold, direction by Arthur Penn, and Buckminster Fuller as the leading man.

Fuller built his first geodesic dome at Black Mountain, and Cage played his first silent music and staged the first "happening" there. Its resident artists (students and teachers) were Albers, the de Koonings, Robert Rauschenberg, Franz Kline, Lippold, Ben Shahn, Lyonel Feininger, Ossip Zadkine, Ilya Bolotowsky, John Chamberlain, Kenneth Noland, José de Creeft, Cy Twombly, Jack Tworkov, Esteban Vicente, Balcomb Greene. Walter Gropius taught architecture; Cunningham, Agnes de Mille, Doris Humphrey and Katherine Litz taught dance. Its composers were Lou Harrison, Stefan Wolpe, Roger Sessions, Ernst Krenek; its photographers, Harry Callahan, Aaron Siskind, Beaumont Newhall and Barbara Morgan. Paul Radin taught anthropology; Marie-Louise von Franz, mythology; Bernard Rudofsky, the history of costume. Paul Goodman was there, and Alfred Kazin, Clement Greenberg, Eric Bentley, Erich Kahler, Clark Foreman, Edward Dahlberg, M.C. Richards. And, in its last years, Charles Olson, Robert Creeley and Robert Duncan were the centrifugal forces of a poetics movement that came to be classified, however erroneously, as the Black Mountain school.

Yet perhaps it is better to retain the legend of Black Mountain, reciting its long list of heroes, than to delve into its reality. Like most utopias, it cannot bear much scrutiny. Martin Duberman, in his quirky and fascinating *Black Mountain: An Exploration in Community* (E.P. Dutton, 1972), spent 500 pages coming to terms with the dark side of Black Mountain. And now Mary Emma Harris, after seventeen years of gathering every possible scrap of information, has produced *The Arts at Black Mountain College*, a luxurious souvenir album, history and compendium that skips lightly over the periodic bad news to celebrate the many accomplishments.

Although it was a short-lived and tiny institution—it had 1,200 students in its twenty-four years, most of them in attendance for only a summer—Black Mountain existed in such a state of perpetual schism and flux that it defies any generalization of intents or purposes. There were, essentially, three Black Mountains, each in turn composed of idiosyncratic members who rarely agreed on very much. The first was the college founded in 1933 by John Andrew Rice and a group of renegade faculty and students from a Congregational Church college in Florida, and whose guiding light, until 1949, was Albers. The second was a remarkable series of summer sessions that were held, with some interruptions, from 1944 to 1953. And the third was the small, mainly literary band of outsiders led by Olson that more or less camped in the ruins of the college from 1951 to 1956.

Rice was an iconoclastic classicist who delighted in the *enfant terrible* role, and taught by questioning everything, particularly his students' most cherished beliefs. When he and his fellow exiles from Rollins College took over some Baptist Assembly buildings on Black Mountain in 1933, they came with few specific plans and one general ideal: to break down the institutionalization (and, for Rice, the "excessive feminization") of the American college. At Black Mountain, faculty and students were to be held jointly and equally responsible for every aspect of their lives and education. There was to be no "administration" and no outside governing body, such as a board of trustees; decisions were to be made by the community as a whole, according to the Quaker "sense of the meeting." Grades and requirements were to be abolished; athletics would be replaced by useful work on the farm and in maintenance. Most important, art was to be the central force—not, as elsewhere, an extracurricular activity—in the students' general education.

Into this hotbed of American progressivism came the coolest of the European modernists, Albers, who had left Germany after the forced closing of the Bauhaus and had arrived in Buncombe County, North Carolina, not speaking a word of English ("All I knew was Buster Keaton and Henry Ford"). In a country without culture but "hungry for a culture," he saw himself as a kind of cultural-spiritual adviser, leading students in a disciplined program of self-discovery through controlled experiments in the elements of form. "Abstracting," he wrote, "is the essential function of the Human Spirit." The rest was distraction.

This meant that no art history was taught at Black Mountain during the Albers years, and no one sketched or painted the exquisite landscape. Art was a series of problems to be solved: the interactions of shapes and colors (only colored paper was used, not variable paint); the split between the "physical" and "psychical" effects of matter. Thus the students labored to make the hard look soft, the wet dry, the warm cold. Wood was made to look like water, eggshells to look like flower petals, wire screen and leaves to look like shadows. Jewelry was made from paper clips and kitchen utensils; kernels of corn were meticulously arranged to give the appearance of a piece of woven cloth.

Albers—disciplined, opinionated, autocratic, "a beautiful teacher and an impossible person," according to Rauschenberg—was to be the determinative force at Black Mountain for seventeen years. Nearly everything that happened

Eliot Weinberger's recent essays are collected in Works on Paper *(New Directions).*

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there during the regular school year can be seen as a result of, or a reaction against, his presence. Against a succession of idealistic and younger faculty members, he stood his ground on the side of educational ideals versus an ideal community, aesthetic preoccupation versus social concerns, isolation from versus interaction with the world. (That these were seen as contradictory impulses may have been the school's undoing.)

Albers had no patience for "this constant overdemocratic nonsense." He insisted that teachers know more about teaching than students, and gradually the students lost their equal role in the administration of the college. He had no interest in the farm and deplored the sloppiness of the students' bohemian dress. Certain crafts—weaving (taught by Anni Albers), woodworking, bookbinding—were permitted, but ceramics was *verboten* as "ashtray art." Most important, Albers was relentlessly apolitical and opposed to the teaching of the social sciences and history. Perhaps the most shocking aspect of Black Mountain during the Albers years is its studied obliviousness to the dramatic contemporary events. When the students performed a proletarian drama by Irwin Shaw, instead of the usual folk plays and Ibsen, Albers stormed out. Students would gather every Saturday to listen to the Texaco opera, but when, six months into World War II, a student brought a radio into the dining hall to hear the news, there was a general scandal. Neither Harris nor Duberman mentions any interest there in the Spanish Civil War.

Albers was also largely successful in isolating the community from what was imagined as the outside world. This meant not only opposing other faculty members' proposals for social work in the community, voter registration drives, crafts programs and the like, but, more devastating, a continual purging of elements that were seen as adversely affecting the image of the college. There was a quota for Jews until the late 1940s. Left-wingers—most notably Eric Bentley, Clark Foreman and Paul Radin—were forced out. Homosexuals were tolerated only if they kept their activities secret. And, in a long and particularly divisive battle, Albers and his followers kept Black Mountain segregated, despite overwhelming opposition by the students, until 1944, when one female black day student was allowed to take classes. (A very few other blacks attended over the next five years.)

Year after year, during the fall, winter and spring, the tiny fiefdoms, each led by a charismatic faculty member, waged war for ideological control of the community and the college. It was not until 1944, with the inauguration of special summer sessions that included many of the regular students and few of the faculty, that Black Mountain achieved the utopian quality that sustains its reputation today.

It should be remembered that nearly all of the luminaries associated with Black Mountain attended only the summer sessions, and usually for a single summer. (Harris's book, for example, opens with a color reproduction of de Kooning's *Asheville, 1948*, though the painter spent only two months of his life there.) Many of them were young and penniless at the time. They were given a few months' vacation in the country—room and board but no pay—and the freedom to teach as much or as little as they pleased, and whatever they pleased. Meals were communal and most of the teaching took place over a dining room table ("education as conversation," Cage called it). Those in the performing arts had an extraordinary opportunity to realize their work: an eager cast of student and faculty dancers, musicians, actors, as well as painters and sculptors to create the sets. Alliances formed or strengthened at Black Mountain—among Cage, Cunningham, Rauschenberg, Fuller, Harrison and Lippold, for example—would have lasting effects on the art of each.

Above all, there were too many stars for any one person to dominate, and none of them carried any vested interest in the community. The subject became the making of art, not the defining of an art school, and the flow of temporary visitors effectively prevented institutional petrification. Moreover, the provisional and improvisatory nature of the summer sessions rhymed perfectly with the techniques that were being explored at the time by Cage and the others: chance operations, random juxtaposition, the introduction of the accidental into the "finished" work, the mixing of media, the dismantling of the "art object." To have

AUGUST POEM

After two days of rain, a clean morning.
The fog burns away, leaving Quincey,
Linda's aging mare, steaming in her pasture
like fresh toast. All over the yard
and under the birches, those little silvery webs
left behind by Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Moth,
and Mustardseed after a midsummer night's dream.
Linda has slept in, comes to the kitchen
for coffee, her face still sleep-lined and warm
like that of a newborn. I kiss it and pretend
to reshape her nose with my fingertips.
Eating a piece of rye and peanut butter
on the porch, I can see the Worcester Range,
the distant Green Mountains, Camel's Hump—
beyond them all I know is the Air Force Base
at Plattsburg. If it ever comes
we'll be among the first to see it,
we have such a magnificent view.

Some days I may forget it entirely,
but mostly I think of this
all the time now: when it comes
will I be alone, will there be time
to gather the children, to cry with them,
to tether the horse, the horse who has been
grazing on the earth's open palm for a million years—
will there be time to tether her in the stall
so she won't know what hit her.

Tom Absher

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Cage on a ladder reading Meister Eckhart while Rauschenberg played scratchy Piaf records on a windup Victrola, Cunningham danced through the audience chased by a barking dog, David Tudor hammered a prepared piano, and slides and movies were screened at odd angles on the wall was the exact opposite of Albers's meticulous arrangements of given forms. For one Albersian at the Cage happening, it was "the Dark Ages."

Albers and the entire art faculty resigned in 1949, and that vision of the Dark Ages became the shadow cast by the gigantic Charles Olson, for whom "the poet [was] the only pedagogue left." The school, in many ways, became its own opposite: writing was emphasized, rather than art; the largely female student body became predominantly male; the upbeat progressives of the 1930s and 1940s became the drunken nihilists of the 1950s, exiles from the postwar materialist boom; politics became a matter of hot debate (one Olson course was called "The Present," its textbook the day's newspaper); "process" replaced "form" as the key word.

Olson envisioned Black Mountain as a twin to the Princeton Institute of Advanced Studies and outlined grand schemes of visiting lecturers and consecutive series of long symposia on nearly every aspect of human knowledge ("a curriculum of the soul"). But he was no administrator, and in McCarthy's America the college was attracting more F.B.I. agents than students. The school fell apart. The dining room was closed and the students fended for themselves. The farm was abandoned, its barn uncleaned, its cows sick and freezing to death. Kudzu vines overran the campus and the classrooms were piled with trash. In the music library phonograph records were melted down to look like Dali's painting. There was, in Olson's words, "no more of this community horseshit"; in fact, there was hardly a community. In its last years, the school had less than twenty students and teachers, most of them professional (or would-be) artists more interested in their own work than in any educational or communal ideals.

And yet this tiny band of outsiders formed the only arts movement to which the name "Black Mountain" has been attached. Olson brought in Robert Creeley and Robert Duncan (who in 1938 had been expelled from the college after one day because of his homosexuality and anarchist views), and stu-

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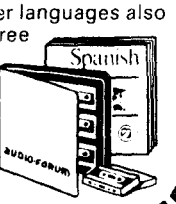

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dents such as Edward Dorn, Joel Oppenheimer and Jonathan Williams wandered in. Together they resurrected the American small-press poetry scene with a flurry of publishing: pamphlets and broadsides on the school's own presses, Williams's Jargon Press and *The Black Mountain Review*, which under Creeley's direction became the best "little" magazine of the 1950s. By 1960, four years after the college had closed, Donald Allen's anthology *The New American Poetry* had formally christened the six poets (along with others who had never attended, such as Paul Blackburn, Larry Eigner and Denise Levertov) the Black Mountain school.

As a movement the poets were largely united in their rejection of the contemporary New Criticism and its well-crafted poem-objects poured into the molds of traditional prosody. For Creeley, form was "never more than an extension of content"; for Duncan, the poem was an event, "not a record of an event, but the event itself"; for Olson, the poet's own breath was to determine the measure of the line; for Levertov, the poem was an organic entity. Most shared an allegiance to William Carlos Williams and a poetry written in a natural American speech; some believed, with Ezra Pound, that the subject of poetry was everything, that poetry was the best way to talk about everything. If the poems in the academic journals of the time were flotillas of small craft, Olson hoped to launch ships of state. He often compared himself and his handful of students with Mao Zedong in the caves of Yenan. As the North Carolina version of Black Mountain dwindled, Olson imagined a network of Black Mountain satellites and cells across the nation: a force.

It is curious that both Albers and Olson spent a great deal of time in Mexico in the late 1940s and early 50s. Albers saw the pre-Columbian pyramids as expressions of a pure form which he could reduce to a few lines on a page. (And, in a weird bit of anthropological fantasy, he declared that Black Mountain was "consciously on the side" of the "Mayan Indians who demanded that the King be the most cultivated among them.") Olson saw the hieroglyphs as poetry, perfect embodiments of the things they represented, and remarked on countless examples, from the domestication of corn to the way the Indians walked, of what he considered to be the Mexicans' seamless unification of intellect and physicality. In one of his most famous sentences he exclaimed, "O, they were hot for the world they lived in, these Maya, hot to get it down the way it was—the way it is, my fellow citizens."

Cold and hot, the winds that emanated from Black Mountain have never dissipated. There is a direct line of formalist preoccupation from Albers to the Abstract Expressionists to the Pop and Op Art painters to the conceptualists to the current breed of neo-Expressionists, neo-Geos and other quality merchants. Albers would be at home in a Museum of Modern Art that exhibits a Polynesian spirit fetish, drained of its religious and social context, next to a Giacometti, because both are anthropomorphic, tall and thin. The cold has dominated the century; the hot remains the permanent heterodox. Olson never won a major prize (nor have Creeley or Duncan); he died with his work largely out of print. Today, of course, there is a shelfful of critical studies, but the poets now working out of Olson's image of what poetry ought to be remain as marginal as Pound or Williams or Olson were in their own times.

At Black Mountain, both the Albers years and the Olson years were small triumphs amid a larger disaster. It may, in the end, be impossible to create a community of artists in a secular society. And—though we assume the benificence of ventures such as Black Mountain and its scores of spinoffs—perhaps it was a mistake to assume that the function of such a community should be education. The inseparable identification of art and school is a recent development. In 1914, the Dadaist poet and boxer Arthur Cravan, raging against art schools, ended his diatribe with this prophetic line: "I am astonished that some crook has not had the idea of opening a writing school." □

The Uncrowned Queen

CELIA McGEE

ELLEN TERRY, Player in Her Time. *By Nina Auerbach. W.W. Norton. 504 pp. $22.50.*

The actress Ellen Terry wore a brown silk dress for her first wedding, in 1864. Not a sign of state or character, she wore it because she was marrying George Frederic Watts, the influential allegorical painter with pre-Raphaelite leanings. She was a bright, romantic 17-year-old; he was 46. Neurasthenic and gloomy, he had wanted to adopt her; their short-lived marriage was an afterthought. Next came *Choosing*, a Watts painting of Ellen in the gown, holding a camellia in one hand and clutching violets to her breast with the other—a *tableau vivant* of renunciation and funereal beauty.

That silk was one of many famous costumes Ellen Terry wore in the course of her seventy-odd-year career. She played roles, Nina Auerbach argues in her fine new biography, both on stage and off. During her lifetime the English theater world went from a demimonde identified with "vagrants and vagabonds" to an acceptable and admired mirror of a moralistic and sentimental Victorian middle class, a spectacle of Edwardian grandeur and, finally, a modernist vehicle for among others Terry's two children, Edward Gordon and Edith Craig. Terry shone throughout. If Victoria was the official ruler, Ellen Terry was her unofficial equal, the "uncrowned Queen of England," as she was later proclaimed at her 1906 jubilee.

After adolescent "boy" roles which Auerbach skillfully analyzes in the context of theatrical transvestism, Terry came into her own just as the theater her parents had raised her in was entering its glory years. This was a boon for their conflicting ambitions: her father, Ben, wanted fame, glamour and artistic independence for his daughter; her mother, Sarah, craved respectability. Ellen Terry was an early and ambivalent figure in the cult of celebrity as we know it. If she were alive today, she might be like Vanessa Redgrave—especially with her close-set eyes, strong chin and tawny loveliness. Or, in spite of herself, Joan Collins. Terry was love object and common property alike.

She endeared herself as a variety of characters, particularly once she returned to the stage in her late 20s, and then came under the aegis of the renowned

Celia McGee, a New York City writer and editor, is working on a book about American art and culture in the late nineteenth century.

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Henry Irving at the Lyceum Theatre. She was cast as the saintly Olivia in an adaptation of *The Vicar of Wakefield.* The role was intended to obscure her reputation as a "fallen woman" who, for six of her past ten years had been mistress to pioneer designer Edward William Godwin, in a kind of Aesthetic-style Eden. Their children, Edy and Gordon, "lived in a stylish Japanese nursery; Edy wore little kimonos and Teddy white piqué suits; they looked only at Walter Crane picture books and played only with wooden toys: mechanical toys, like frilly dolls, were 'vulgar.'" Terry herself dressed in flowing Aesthetic outfits and had increasingly to contend with the vaporish irrationality of the moody Godwin.

Her best-known impersonation was Ophelia. As Victorian England's most loved madwoman, she managed to embody the period's fondness for sexily expiring heroines while hinting at the untamed nature and redemptive freedom Hamlet's beloved represented to French Romanticism. Auerbach suggests that both Ophelia's madness and her drowning prefigured Terry's own struggles with incipient breakdown as early as the 1890s; her "insane excitability," as contemporaries called it, gave depth to all her roles. Equally fraught was her Lady Macbeth. John Singer Sargent painted *Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth* in 1889, a towering portrait of a woman warrior that was justifiably celebrated and that Auerbach maintains reveals more than Terry would have liked—alienation from a wifely role and from the Lyceum that imposed such interpretations. By the turn of the century she had entered George Bernard Shaw's orbit with an erotically charged correspondence initiated long before they ever met.

The Terry-Shaw letters, published in 1931, are probably responsible for her enduring reputation. But Auerbach has also made use of many unpublished Ellen Terry letters that contribute to a much richer understanding of her subject. Terry was a compulsive, eloquent, quirky and prodigious letter writer. The extravagant and dramatic gestures that seem to have been her stock in trade are evident there, as are her fierce intelligence, great wit and passionate, erratic nature—the pages are awash with underlined or oversize words, different styles of handwriting and a hodgepodge of signatures and names. This was a woman who could gently lecture Irving on the correct color for mourning in Shakespeare's day or could blast her son, in a series of puns and frightening insights, for his treatment of women. Still, the overriding emotion Auerbach discerns in Terry's demeanor is pathos, a trait for which she feels the actress gave up her more natural and, in a woman, more intimidating gift of humor, and her talent for comedy: "If Ellen Terry's impulse to laughter had not been mutilated into pathos, she would probably never have become a tragic heroine."

Pathos was an aspect of what Auerbach has previously called "romantic imprisonment"; Terry transformed the social limitations and attitudes that confined women in the nineteenth century into a creative treasure house. This triumph over a sense of restriction also pertained to her marriages and love affairs. Mostly the men were exceptional, or exceptionally loving, but personally ineffectual. In Henry Irving, her professional partner and on-again-off-again lover, she almost met her match, but theirs was a clash between generous, vulnerable vitality and crafty egomania; Auerbach draws a convincing picture of the great entrepreneur as a Dracula-like figure worthy of the imagination of his friend Bram Stoker. The problem with Terry was that she kept outgrowing the roles men set for her, even as she tried, Victorian to the end, not to. This was true as far back as her childhood, when Lewis Carroll took her as an inspiration for Alice but turned on her the moment she showed signs of becoming adult.

Auerbach has also previously written about the theme of "woman and the demon"—woman as terrifying and culpable other. Terry seems to have assumed that persona by becoming a public figure in a society that used the expression "public woman" for both actresses and prostitutes. It is a testimony to her conciliatory skills and powers of subversion that she nevertheless became an icon for a domesticated, straitlaced, middle-class culture. She did so at a certain cost, letting a saccharine identity as a "good woman" supersede that of a great artist, and often allowing drama to swing over into melodrama. She played self-parody for laughs and love. A habitual means of self-satire was flubbing her lines, a tic Virginia Woolf (echoed by Auerbach) insisted upstaged "the other actors . . . as electric lights are put out by the sun." But it seems equally plausible that this was Terry's way of appearing less of a threat.

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Auerbach's book charms through its illuminating interweaving of reality and fiction, theater and society, the individual and history. Loosely chronological, it operates according to an internal logic of its own, circling back repeatedly to certain dates, people, events, paintings, and shedding a new light on them each time. Terry may have taken her identities from other people and from her milieu, but it meant she had to understand both; Auerbach pinpoints all the ingredients in that symbiotic relationship.

Biography can be just the writing of a life; *Ellen Terry* is a reading. Only occasionally does Auerbach strain credibility with a far-fetched analogy or a historical shortcut. This book is elegant and ingenious, and it tells at least one untold story: Auerbach's research turned up new material that establishes Edith Craig as an important historical figure in her own right. Actress, costume designer, producer, proud lesbian, her mother's tortured guardian, she was a leader of a community of women that transformed Ellen Terry from "Our Lady of the Lyceum" into feminist patron saint.

I think that Auerbach is correct in writing that, from an early age, Terry's "self that felt lived apart from the self others saw." This biography has come close to conveying both selves. It evokes the experience of an Ellen Terry performance; it also conveys Terry's sheer love of theater. It captures the essence of a long difficult life. It shows a little girl turning somersaults across a stage. □

Backroom Boys

LARRY BENSKY

THE IRAN-*CONTRA* CONNECTION: Secret Teams and Covert Operations in the Reagan Era. *By Jonathan Marshall, Peter Dale Scott and Jane Hunter. South End Press. 315 pp. $30. Paper $11.*

Attentive followers of the now mercifully concluded Iran/*contra* hearings must have reflected, from time to time, that a book could be written about the things left unsaid and the subjects left unexplored by the tepid Congressional select committee members and their cautious counsels. If you're curious about worldwide neofascist paramilitary operations, drug dealing and money laundering, weapons transfers and the entire geopolitical agenda omitted from the hearings, *The Iran*-Contra *Connection* is that book. In fact, the hearings provided so little new in those areas that the volume barely needs updating, even though it was completed shortly before the hearings began. (South End Press is, clearly, not in the same game as Pocket Books, which had St. Ollie's manly ejaculations pressed between soft covers and displayed on news racks nationwide just a week after his canonization.)

One should not, perhaps, be too harsh on the hacks and hulks of the Congressional committees. They were clearly concerned about re-establishing their right to have a say in covert actions rather than in examining the necessity and meaning of such activities. Naturally then, they did not intend to find out very much, and not very much is just what they found.

Instead, we learned unsurprising facts about the Reagan White House—about the paranoia and the backstabbing there, about the willful ignorance and the fanaticism too. We also learned about lying to Congress. And yet something more serious than lying to Congress (which, after all, lies to itself with great regularity), falsifying and destroying documents, obstructing justice, profiteering and conspiring to do all of the above has been going on for some time now. That something emerges only occasionally to the public eye, and those who sight it are usually treated like viewers of the Loch Ness monster: they are dismissed from the "legitimate" news media and relegated to writing books for South End Press.

Nevertheless, "it" is there. And Peter Dale Scott, who has spent more than twenty years compiling data on the subject; Jane Hunter, editor of the iconoclastic monthly *Israeli Foreign Affairs*; and Jonathan Marshall, former Washingtonian now exercising his invective as editorial page editor of the independent daily Oakland *Tribune*, have put it into book form. "It" is an old-boy network of far rightists, gonzo adventurers, profiteers, drug- and gunrunners, religious fanatics and intelligence freelancers

*Larry Bensky anchored Pacifica Radio's live gavel-to-gavel broadcasts of the Congressional Iran/*contra *hearings.*

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who intersect regularly with the various government agencies they once served.

The Reagan era's peculiar contribution to this band of gypsies has been to adopt them, via the National Security Council staff, as a kind of personal prelature in King Ronald's realm. Whereas they once had to satisfy themselves with the privations of existence in places like Guatemala, Bolivia and South Korea, pausing only to rest occasionally on the Costa del Sol, for the past six years they've sipped and supped in Washington itself.

In a sense, the adoption of these public servants turned private adventurers corresponds nicely with the wave of privatization that has done so much for health care, airline travel, telephone costs and education during the Reagan years. The main difference is of course that in domestic policy, privatization rarely kills overtly. In foreign affairs, people die. A lot.

Those dead and their survivors are not, by and large, of much concern to the Reaganauts, and are even less so to their mercenary allies, all of whom you can find profiled in chilling detail in *The Iran*-Contra *Connection*. In addition to those on the Secords, Norths and Rodriguezes there are passages here on the ever-available psychotics from the irredentist Cuban community, headed by the terrorist Congress of United Revolutionary Organizations; the fanatic fascists around retired Maj. Gen. John Singlaub; the Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Candidate LaRouche; and even some of the Pope's dopes, veterans of the Italian government's P2 scandal. And you can also find useful accounts of how "democracies" like El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala are being reflagged as land mines for Reagan's "low-intensity" warfare.

Yet the Iran/*contra* matter would never have happened had the old-boy network of military and intelligence agency retreads remained an old *goy* network. It was the intrusion of agents from Israel, in its current incarnation as the land of bilk and money, which really got things on—or off—the track. "Elements in Israel," the authors write, "undoubtedly wanted the United States involved [in the Iran weapons trade] . . . so as to distance the United States from the Arab world, and ultimately to establish Israel as the only real strategic partner of the United States in the region."

No matter what Manucher Ghorbanifar really said to North in that famous bathroom conversation, the Israelis clearly had a world-class group of *nebbishes* to manipulate in Robert McFarlane, North and Rear Adm. John Poindexter. And so the Reagan Administration found itself "violating its own arms embargo, bargaining with terrorists over hostages, and potentially tilting the military scales in favor of America's sworn enemy, Iran."

It takes a certain genius to concoct such a disaster, a genius that relies on unrealistic quantities of secrecy and massive self-delusion. To *really* understand why hostages are taken in the Middle East (or why the *contras* can never defeat the Sandinistas) requires a fix on reality clearly impermissible in the Reagan White House. It would intrude on the dreams of the quick buck artists (Secord, Albert Hakim); the quick battle fantasists (North); and the quick bureaucracy solvers (Poindexter, William Casey).

Only someone as obtuse as our Great Forgetter could preside over such operations and not see their obvious end games. The President does have a lot of help, however, from a genteel (or complicitous) Congress; from news media reluctant to explore, share and follow through on information; and from a public kept blissfully ignorant, still, of what was really going on.

The Iran-Contra *Connection* is a start toward educating the public on those things that everyone wishes weren't going on, or would go away. Everyone, that is, but those who keep them going. □

THEATER.

THOMAS M. DISCH

Lady, Be Good!
Dreamgirls
An Evening With the President
Two Gentlemen of Verona

If there really is a heaven and I get to go there, I'd like to spend eternity doing the Charleston with Nikki Sahagen. She is the star and Corybant Supreme of the Goodspeed Opera's revival of the Gershwins' 1924 *Lady, Be Good!* and in her Charleston the Jazz Age lives again—lives, fizzes, spins and grins with manic, infectious, polymorphous delight. The Charleston, like its grandchild Disco, is better danced en masse than *à deux*, and therefore partnership is much less at issue than in other kinds of ballroom dancing, whether in the apache (trust me) acrobatics of the tango or the more reciprocal centrifugal evolutions of the waltz or the "run-around step" performed by the Astaires in this show's original production. Because of its communal nature and zippy tempo the Charleston is not a particularly erotic dance: instead of focusing energy in a tightly controlled lower torso (the rumba, the fox trot), it dissipates it through a frenetic flailing of limbs. It celebrates looseness, freedom and fun, and the clothes and hairstyles that permit such things to happen. In all those respects, Sahagen is the very Spirit of '24, and when she is inciting the entire cast to riot in that supreme showstopper "Fascinating Rhythm," she passes beyond all rational praise to become a star in the firmament. As Ira Gershwin put it at one point, "Me oh my!" And I have to agree.

To praise Sahagen in such terms implies a proportional paean to the choreographer, Dan Siretta, and whenever it was possible to consider the dance apart from that one dancing body, Siretta's wit and practical wisdom were equally manifest. Jim Walton, in the role originated by Fred Astaire, evokes his great predecessor more by his mannerisms (that smile, that eyebrow) than by his dancing, but my notion of Astaire, being derived entirely from his movies, is of a creature more incorporeal than any *body* could ever be on stage. In any case, there simply wasn't room on the stage of the Goodspeed for the sweeping motions that Walton needed to be an effective partner to Sahagen, and so he came across as only normatively wonderful. In the essential musical-comedy skill of transiting quickly from song to comedy to tap-dancing and never for a moment seeming unnatural, he was the dabbest hand in the show.

For sheer stage magic, however, the cake was taken by Richard Stillman, in

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a role floating free from the deceptively diffident plot. He simply pops up from time to time to liven the party, like a benign version of Joel Grey's master of ceremonies in *Cabaret*. He plays the banjo and ukelele, walks on his hands, sets "Fascinating Rhythm" into motion like a twentieth-century Pied Piper and sings the uncannily *faux* naïve "Little Jazz Bird." In his role as a Bertie Wooster-like male ditz, Christopher Seppe exhibits a comedic range from droll to gaga, a John Held Jr. drawing come to life.

The sets and the two drop curtains by Eduardo Sicangco are an homage to the cartooning style of Held, the illustrator whose Kewpie doll flappers and bell-bottomed beaux epitomized the silly, boop-boop-a-doop side of flaming youth; they express exactly the spirit of *Lady, Be Good!* This is the lost Golden Age that yuppiedom yearns to return to, a world of evening clothes, cocktails and canapés, where ethical values are turned topsy-turvy with no unseemly fuss. "I'd rather Charleston," the bankrupted heroine declares to her feckless brother, and the title song is a solicitation by an aged roué urging her to join him not in bed but in a scheme to defraud the estate of the romantic (millionaire pretending to be hobo) lead. Everyone is mercenary in the most matter-of-fact and lighthearted way, and the effect of such conscienceless gaiety set spinning to the tunes of George Gershwin is as exhilarating as a shopping spree on your ex's credit card. Rarely is a musical of this vintage exhumed with so little creaking of the vault doors, and this freshness is due in part to the Goodspeed staff's musical archeology. Working with the show's original, long-lost book and orchestration, which were among the treasures unearthed from crates that Warner Brothers had deposited in a Secaucus, New Jersey, warehouse, they have re-created a mint-condition version of one of the best musicals of all time. It will be at the Goodspeed Opera House, East Haddam, through October 2. Overcome any fear you may have of the Connecticut wilderness and see it if you possibly can.

Dreamgirls has returned to Broadway in a production that is not so much a revival as a reduction or reproduction of the original. It premiered in 1982 at the Imperial Theater and was one of the pioneers in the ever-more-dominant musical comedy trend of scenery as star. This production, on the smaller stage of the Ambassador Theatre, is a pared-down 1985 roadshow version with new choreography, which is now at the end of its national tour. It returned to New York with melancholy timeliness, only a few days before the July 2 death of its director and choreographer, Michael Bennett. It is hard not to regard this *Dreamgirls* as, however inadvertently, a living memorial to the man who had been, since at least 1975's *A Chorus Line*, the prime mover of Broadway musical theater.

That that honor fell to a director/choreographer rather than to a composer/lyricist does say something about the recent condition of the Broadway musical, and *Dreamgirls*, in both its strengths and weaknesses, is a prime example of what the prime mover hath wrought. The physical stagecraft, even in this reduced version, is dazzling and all that jazz, and the choreography is nothing less than monolithic: not a moment, not a gesture seems left to chance. As with such later "music dramas" as *Les Misérables*, the book never relaxes into ordinary speech. Indeed, its passages of recitative are more inspired than all but a few of its songs, including the much-reprised title song. One can't imagine either Henry Krieger's music or Tom Eyen's lyrics filtering their way into the collective unconscious like the Gershwins' songs, until we hear the very elevators humming them. Yet as servants of Bennett's vision (and supervision), they earned their Tonys, for the show *works*.

And so do the performers in this production, most memorably Lillias White as Effie, who brings down the Act I curtain with one of the unlikeliest love songs (though "scream of rage" would be a more apt description) ever sung, "And I Am Telling You I'm Not Going." In the more genial but equally robustious role of James Thunder Early, Herbert Rawlings Jr. is a one-man tornado of rhythm and blues. Indeed, there is no one in the cast who does not wring every last erg of theatrical energy from the material provided.

The story employed to support all these exertions concerns the rise to fame and fortune of the Dreams, a singing group not unlike the Supremes. In Act I, Effie, the most talented singer of the group, is squeezed out of her lead spot and then out of the group altogether. In Act II, the Dreams sell out to glitz and glamour, while Effie picks herself up, dusts herself off and has her own big platinum-and-mink success—without having to lose weight! In the end everyone has one last good sing together, except Weyman Thompson, as glamorous, treacherous Curtis Taylor Jr., the Dreams' Svengali, who is left in the lurch by his four Trilbys. Personally, I think Curtis gets a raw deal, since the other characters were equally opportunistic, but Broadway (like Washington) is a world in which crime, though it may pay handsomely, still requires a scapegoat.

Dreamgirls isn't unequivocal, pulse-quickening fun the way *Lady, Be Good!* is, but neither is it as dreadfully earnest as *Les Misérables* or as brassily numb-skulled as *Starlight Express*. If you missed *Dreamgirls* the first time round, as I did, you made a mistake, which you can cor-

Les Neues

"Geud eveninque. 'Ere's what's 'appeninque:

"Presidment Reagain has announced en weurds conciliatorment dot l'Unione Soviette mai de non be un empiere d'eville, mais il est un countrie des creeps nevaire sans less.

"Les 'Ondeuras et Le Nicqueragua et El Salvadeaur et Le Guatemaleaux sont mixed impossiblement en this commentateur's mind. Oui shalle skeep them!

"Professeur Carl Saigonne spoaque out recentment d'against les nuecleare weaponnes, pointinque teu l'effecs de 'wintrer nueclears'—les temperateures would plummez-vous, endangerinque virtuellement all life dans eurth, non de speak des objecs *inanimatement*, which cracque at leau temperateures et would be *totalment euslesse*! Wou!

"There *est* hungaire en Amerique, accordment teu l'old friend de Le Presidment, Edween Mice.

"'Il est un hungaire foure yette *anothoire* term de Presidment Reagain!' Mice said teu reporteurs en Nice while gobblement un wedge des meatballes spaghette sauce. Then Mice shootaix les dice as un diveursion. What des politecs sunc teu?

"'Ave un pleasment nuit. M. Dupleau will be bac tomoreau. 'E 'ad le fleu . . . " *Hugo Flesch*

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rect now, if you don't procrastinate. It's a limited run.

Recently in these pages I commented on the President's good fortune in living at a time when satire is moribund, he being such an appealing target. I hadn't then seen Jim Morris's impersonation or I would have had to make a large exception. Morris modulates skillfully from the territory of permitted ridicule (tics, foibles, catch phrases) through the midrange of nontelevisable but *de rigueur* cabaret bawdry to a few jabs with an unbated blade that *The Nation*'s Christopher Hitchens himself could not improve on. Indeed, the President, as impersonated by Morris, confirms Hitchens's "October surprise" theory. Morris's act, *An Evening With the President*, takes the form of an hourlong press conference, and the audience has the opportunity to join the act as members of the press. As things now stand at the White House, these may be the last Presidential press conferences any of us will ever see until the happy day that Jim Morris has to look for a new object for his ridicule. Meanwhile, he can be seen Tuesday through Saturday nights at The Ballroom on West 28th Street in Manhattan.

Of all Shakespeare's comedies, *Two Gentlemen of Verona* is the least eventful, the least inspired, the unfunniest and the most unfelt, but possibly just because it is so lacking in a distinctive character of its own, it is quintessentially Shakespearean. There is one great song, two clowns stuffed with quips and quibbles, four young lovers as symmetrically disposed as the structural elements of a Palladian villa, ample opportunity for swordplay and costume changes, and gallons of liquidly euphuistic verse just good enough for a skilled thespian to put a spin on, to the wonder of those without professional endowments. Its one unique feature is a live dog.

In the new production directed by Stuart Vaughan at the Delacorte Theater in Central Park, to which both play and director are returning after a thirty-year interval (Vaughan's first *Two Gentlemen* initiated the tradition of free Shakespeare in Central Park, for which blessing I offer a preliminary standing ovation: Hurrah!), everything is as it should be. In the role of Crab, the lovely Roxanne scored a popular triumph in a performance notable for its restraint and diffidence. She scarcely wagged her tail, but she won all our hearts and was warmly applauded after every scene.

Elizabeth McGovern, as Julia, was no less endearing in her own way. After she'd established a one-to-one relationship with the audience in her opening soliloquy, she never left us out of her confidence, like a nervous flirt uncertain you'll remember her name once the party breaks up. And that is Julia all over. Deborah Rush, as Silvia, has to fight an uphill battle against Shakespeare's inattention, which in the end she wins by being resolutely pretty and having such a sweet, reedy, Eartha Kittenish vocal instrument. Both women (and the cast in general) are beautifully supported by Lindsay Davis's costumes, which are of a cut more Caroline than Elizabethan, but what the hell, it's summer and school is out.

The ladies were not quite so ably supported by their two gentlemen. The roles of Valentine and Proteus are outfitted with such one-size-fits-all sentiments (Valentine is magnanimous and Proteus an insouciant louse) that actors in those roles must simply be their winningest selves and hope that the personality that shines through the lines will carry the day. James Goodman, as Valentine, has the harder time of it, since his lanky corn-fed disingenuousness doesn't sort well with the Lyly-livered verses of the text. Thomas Gibson's vulpine Proteus is a better physical match, and his slippery smile is almost a match for Elizabeth McGovern's. When they end up with each other, poetic justice seems to have been served.

As the Duke of Milan, Jerome Dempsey came on as the Little King of comic-strip fame and vied with Roxanne as the show's biggest scene-stealer. Dylan Baker, as Launce, is cursed with the play's god-awfulest elbownudgery, viz., the conclusion of Act III, scene 1, when he catalogues his milkmaid-mistress's many virtues and defects. By the time that scene ended, I wished that the Bard could have been imported from the Flying Karamazov Brothers' production of *The Comedy of Errors* to be awarded another loud raspberry. Whenever he could be, Baker was energetically funny, and that was true of the production as a general rule, for which Vaughan must receive the lion's share of credit. In fairness, the Shakespeare Festival ought to let the man have his choice of *Hamlet*, *As You Like It* or *Richard III* for his next tour of duty. Two *Two Gentlemens* is surely beyond the call of duty. □

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A planning meeting

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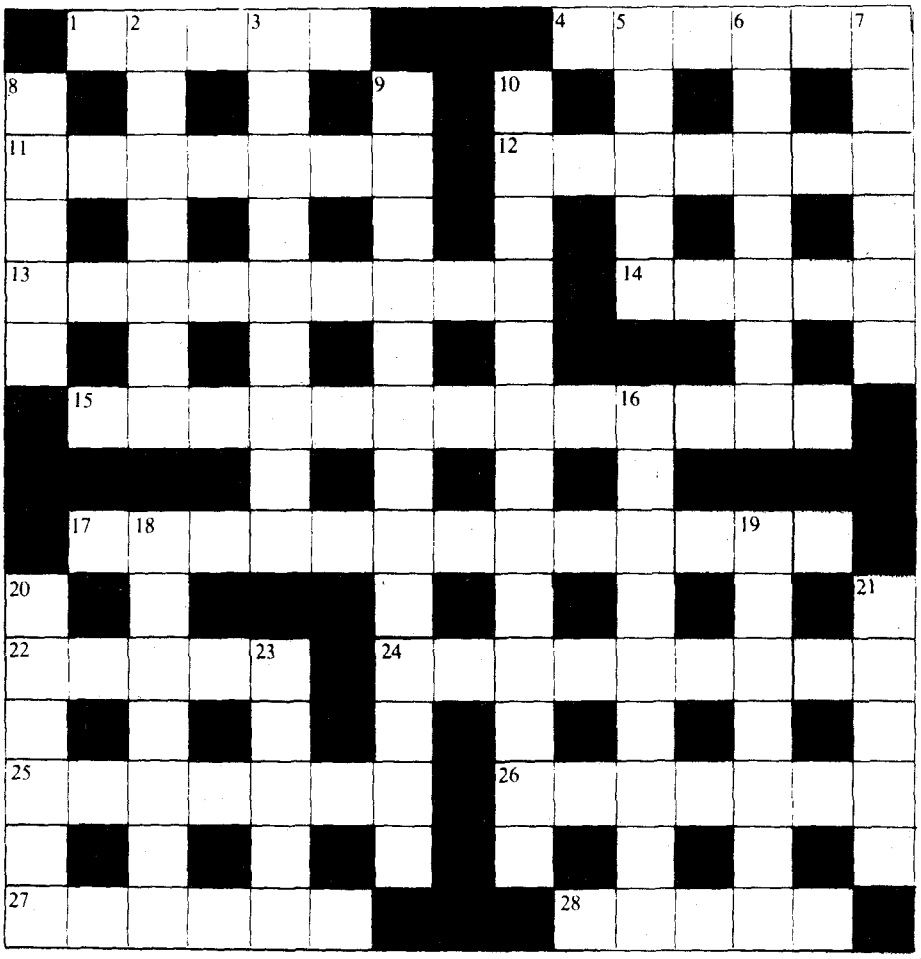

ACROSS

1 and 4 Hearst, and other publishers with multiple outlets? (One might see them at very informal parties, or even at Christmas time.) (5,6)
11 Rat-catcher, etc. removed and displaced—that might be the trouble. (7)
12 Change the pitch—or change the form to mark a different mood. (7)
13 Anyone can, to disguise the little pest! (9)
14 One may take advantage of a lift before he goes downhill. (5)
15 There's no purpose to the first part getting prostrate, but if so, you might find it more difficult to get covered. (8,5)
17 Attached to what might be in the window? If you are you might show off what seems to be partial to the Princess's fun and games! (4,2,7)
22 Nothing like Paris green is obvious here. (5)
24 Quite a bit under par, and seen to be like a sharp looker. (5-4)
25 Does the one who digs the trench also leave you stranded? (7)
26 Only a virgin could capture one, it was said. (7)
27 The angler did this, and behaved rather drunkenly. (6)
28 Were such old-fashioned vehicles associated with the rebellion? (5)

DOWN

2 Ray might be so when the first part of the play goes most nicely. (7)
3 But the worm will be late, if one finds it! (5,4)
5 What a storybook wolf threatens to do, and removes a piece from the board? (5)
6 One might speak Spanish or Portuguese and still be Irani, it could turn out. (7)
7 Did what the court did, when it comes to the samovar, like a rocket! (6)
8 Did the Kaiser say a treaty was one of 1 across? (Obviously not much of a fight involved!) (5)
9 Earth might be one, but the penitent might display such. (6,2,5)
10 Is a party brought back from the dead if one does? (5,6,2)
16 The helper's in trouble here—you have to fill things up, perhaps. (9)
18 and 20 Past the edge, 22 takes a third person to steal up on the German in Tijuana, perhaps. (4,3,6)
19 No specific person is so represented in a New York group. (7)
20 See 18
21 Proving there's more than one Paradise Garden. (Anthony was a relatively well-known one of them.) (5)
23 In Utah, Oedipus might be something one could resort to. (5)

SEE LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION AT LEFT

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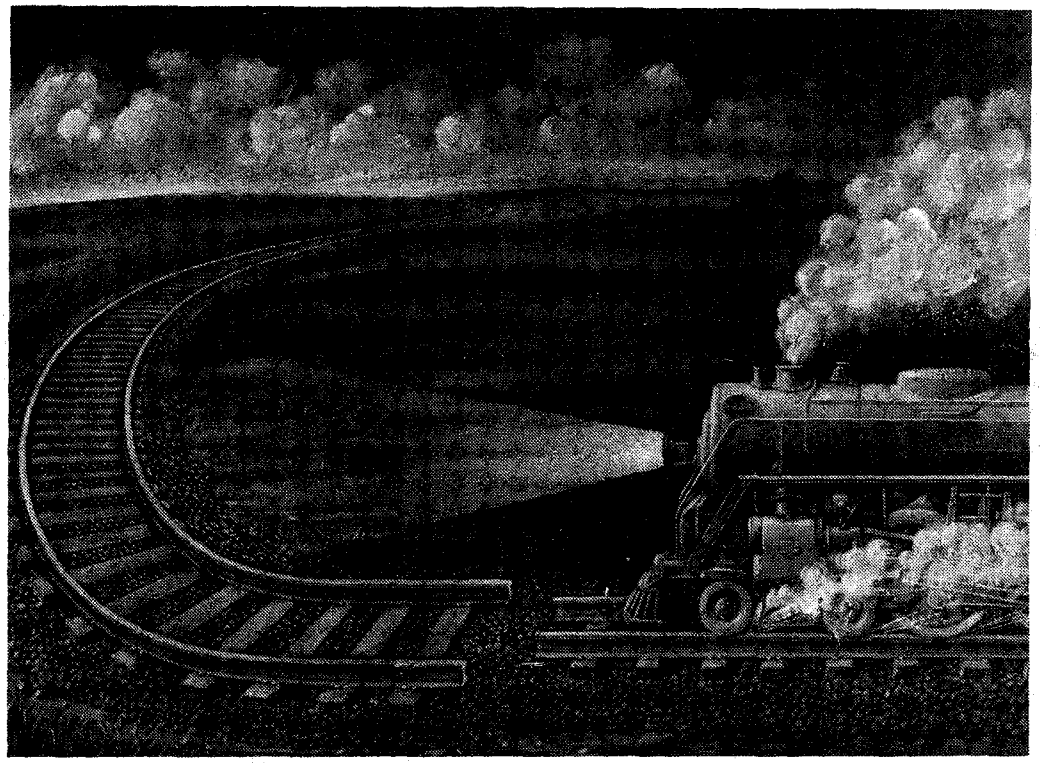
Issues of the Information Age:

The way beyond Babel.



Imagine trying to build a railroad system if every locomotive manufacturer used a different track gauge. Every local stretch of railroad had its own code of signals. And in order to ride a train, you needed to know the gauges and the signals and the switching procedures and the route and the conductor's odd pronunciation of the station names.

The business of moving and managing information is in a similar state today. Machines can't always talk to each other. Proprietary systems and networks abound, with suppliers often jockeying to make theirs the de facto standard. The enormous potential of the Information Age is being dissipated by incompatibility.

The solution, as we see it, is common standards which would allow electronic systems in one or many locations to work together. People will be informed and in control, while the systems exchange, process, and act on information automatically.

AT&T is working with national, international, and industry-wide organizations to set up comprehensive, international standards to be shared by everyone who uses and provides information technology. We think it's time for everyone in our industry to commit to developing firm, far-reaching standards. The goal: to provide our customers with maximum flexibility and utility. Then, they can decide how and with whom to work.

We foresee a time when the promise of the Information Age will be realized. People will participate in a worldwide Telecommunity through a vast, global network of networks, the merging of communications and computers. They'll be able to handle information in any form—conversation, data, images, text—as easily as they make a phone call today.

The science is here now. The technology is coming along rapidly. But only with compatibility will the barriers to Telecommunity recede.

Telecommunity is our goal. Technology is our means.℠

We're committed to leading the way.

AT&T

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